



MEXICAN GENTLEMAN.

SIX MONTHS
RESIDENCE AND TRAVELS
IN
MEXICO;



CONTAINING
REMARKS ON THE PRESENT STATE
OF
NEW SPAIN,

ITS NATURAL PRODUCTIONS, STATE OF SOCIETY,
MANUFACTURES, TRADE, AGRICULTURE,
ANTIQUITIES, &c.

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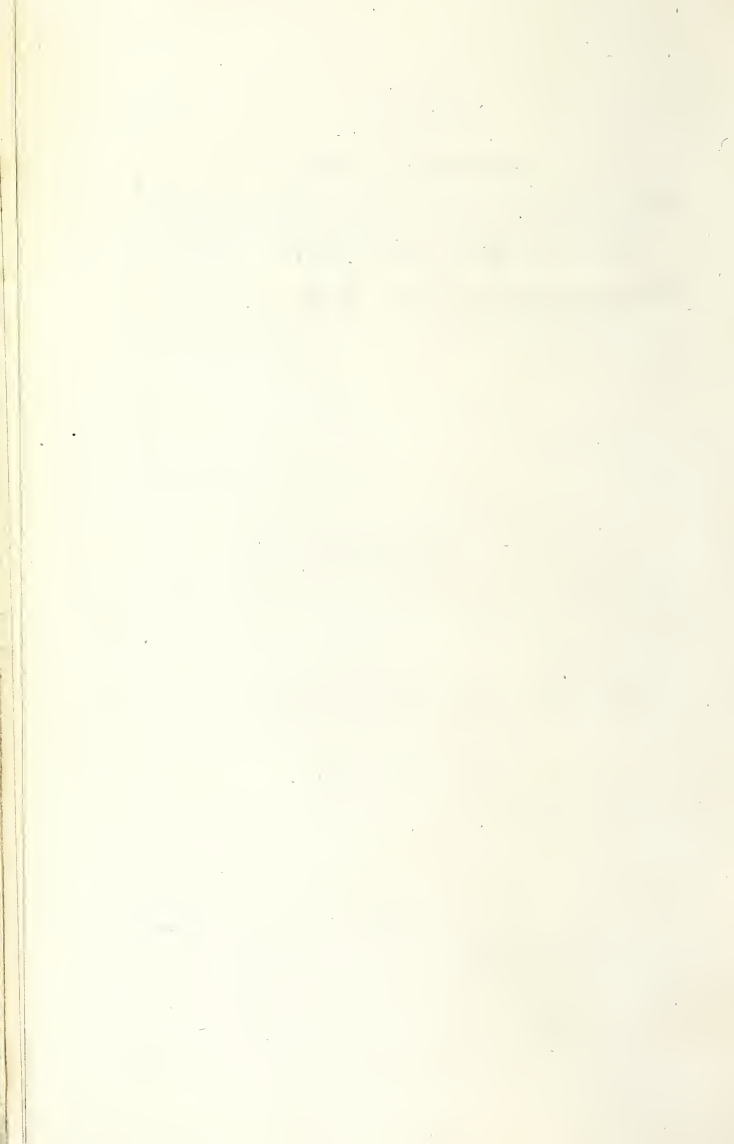
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SIX MONTHS IN MEXICO.

CHAPTER XX.

Humming Birds.

No subject of Natural History has, since the discovery of the New World, excited the admiration of mankind more universally than this diminutive favourite of nature; which before the time of Columbus was unknown to the Old World. Though it abounds more in the warm regions, it is, however, dispersed over every part of America and its islands, and in almost every climate, for it is found

during the summer months in Hudson's Bay and Canada. Captain Cook brought many fine specimens from Nootka Sound, and I now add several new species from the temperate Table-land of Mexico, and the woods in the vicinity of the snow mountains of Orizaba, Pepocatapetl, &c.

There is not, it may safely be asserted, in all the zoological productions of the varied works of nature, any family that can bear a comparison, for singularity of form, splendour of colour, or number and variety of species, with this the smallest of the feathered creation. In my former collection, the variety of different species amounted to nearly a hundred, and every day brings me acquainted with more. In Jamaica I procured the smallest species known, which is considerably less than some of the bees;—and in Mexico I found many new species, whose splendid colours glow with a brilliancy and lustre not

surpassed by any with which we were previously acquainted.

It has been a subject of much regret that the natural history and manners of the numerous species which compose this extraordinary little family should be almost unknown; I have, therefore, paid all the attention in my power towards supplying this desideratum, but yet much is still wanting. The first I ever saw alive of these minute creatures was in the yard of the house of Mr. Miller, in Kingston, Jamaica. He had taken his station on a twig of a large tamarind tree, which was close to the house, and overspread part of the yard: where, perfectly indifferent to the number of persons constantly passing within a few yards of him, he spent most of the day. There were few blossoms on the tree, and it was not the breeding season, yet he most pertinaciously kept absolute possession of his dominions;

for the moment any other bird, though ten times as large as himself, approached near his tree, he attacked him most furiously, and drove him off, always returning to the same twig he had before occupied, which he had worn quite bare of leaves for the space of three or four inches by constantly perching on it. I often approached within a few feet of him, observing with pleasure his tiny operation of dressing and pluming, and listening to his weak, simple, and often-repeated note. I could easily have caught him, but was unwilling to destroy so interesting a little visitant, who had afforded me so much pleasure. In my excursions round Kingston I procured many of the same species, as well as the long-tailed black one, and a few others; and especially the one I have already mentioned as the smallest hitherto described, but which however has the finest voice of any of the tribe.

I spent some agreeable hours in the place that had been the Botanical Garden of Jamaica, and on the various trees now growing to a luxurious size met with many curious birds, among which this specimen was perched on the highest branch of the bread-fruit or cabbage-tree. He poured forth his slight querulous note among a most curious assemblage of the valuable indigenous and exotic plants and trees of the island, on a spot, once the pride of Jamaica, but now a deserted wilderness. The various individuals of this charming little race are, as I have observed, scattered over the whole American continent and its islands; every district and island producing its local inhabitants. Near Kingston I found only four kinds, all known to naturalists. But in Mexico the species are numerous, and mostly new and undescribed. Near the capital, on my arrival, scarcely one was to be seen, but in the months of May

and June numbers were found in the Botanic Garden, in the centre of the city, and by offering a reward to the Indians many were brought to me alive. I had at one time nearly seventy in cages, which with attention and care I kept living for some weeks ; and could I have devoted my whole time to them, I had no doubt of the possibility of bringing them alive to Europe. The accounts of their being so fierce and untameable as to beat themselves to death when confined are not true ; no bird is more easily reconciled to its new situation. It is true they are seldom off the wing, but they never strike themselves against the cage, nor the glass of a window ; they remain, as it were, suspended in the air, in a space barely sufficient for them to move their wings, and the humming noise proceeds entirely from the surprising velocity with which they perform the motion, by which they keep their bodies in the air,

apparently motionless, for hours together. In each cage was placed a small earthen cup, about half filled with sugar and water of the consistence of a thin syrup: in this various flowers had been inserted, principally the yellow bell-shaped corolla of the great aloe (*Agava Americana*); the end of which next the stem being cut off permitted the liquid to flow into the flower, into which the little prisoners were constantly inserting their long bified tongues, and drawing up its luscious contents. This operation was generally, like most of the actions of the bird, performed on the wing, but they sometimes alighted on the flower, perching against its sides in an upright position, and pumping up the mucilaginous liquid.

It is probable the whole of them feed on insects; numbers I am certain do so, having watched them attentively in the Botanic Garden at Mexico, in pursuit of their

minute prey ; and in the yard of the house in which I resided at Themascaltepec, when one of them took entire possession of a pomegranate tree in blossom, on which he sat the whole day, catching the small flies that came to the flowers.

Naturalists have therefore fallen into error in asserting that these birds live entirely on the saccharine substance contained in flowers, as I have very frequently seen them take flies and other insects on the wing, and have on dissection found them in their stomachs.

There is little doubt that, with a supply of this food, as well as syrup, honey, &c., they might be kept alive in large cages ; but the cages in which I made my experiments were much too small for the purpose.

Although, like the robin and other birds of Europe, in a state of nature they are extremely tenacious of any intrusion of their own species on their dominions, yet in cap-

tivity, when several kinds have been confined together, I never observed the least inclination to quarrel, but have seen the smaller take what appeared to be unwarrantable liberties with those of five times their size and strength:—thus, when the perch has been occupied by the great Blue-throated one, the diminutive Mexican Star has settled on the long beak of the former, and remained perched on it some minutes, without its offering to resent the insult.

The house I resided in at Xalapa for several weeks on my return to Vera Cruz, was only one story high, enclosing, like most of the Spanish houses, a small garden in the centre, the roof projecting six or seven feet from the walls, covering a walk all round, and leaving a small space only between the tiles, and the trees which grew in the centre. From the edges of these tiles to the branches of the trees in the garden, the spiders had

spread their innumerable webs so closely and compactly that they resembled a net. I have frequently watched with much amusement the cautious peregrination of the humming bird, who, advancing beneath the web, entered the various labyrinths and cells in search of entangled flies, but as the larger spiders did not tamely surrender their booty, the invader was often compelled to retreat; being within a few feet, I could observe all their evolutions with great precision. The active little bird generally passed once or twice round the court, as if to reconnoitre his ground, and commenced his attack by going carefully under the nets of the wily insect, and seizing by surprise the smallest entangled flies, or those that were most feeble. In ascending the angular traps of the spider great care and skill was required; sometimes he had scarcely room for his little wings to perform their office, and the least deviation

would have entangled him in the complex machinery of the web, and involved him in ruin. It was only the works of the smaller spider that he durst attack, as the larger sort rose to the defence of their citadels, when the besieger would shoot off like a sunbeam, and could only be traced by the luminous glow of his refulgent colours. The bird generally spent about ten minutes in this predatory excursion, and then alighted on a branch of the *Avocata* to rest and refresh himself, placing his crimson star-like breast to the sun, which then presented all the glowing fire of the ruby, and surpassing in lustre the diadem of monarchs. Europeans who have seen only the stuffed remains of these little feathered gems in museums have been charmed with their beautiful appearance; but those who have examined them whilst living, displaying their moving crests, throats, and tails, like the peacock in the sun, can never look with plea-

sure on their mutilated forms. I have carefully preserved about two hundred specimens, in the best possible manner, yet they are still but the shadow of what they were in real life. The reason is obvious; for the sides of the laminae, or fibres of each feather, being of a different colour from the surface, will change when seen in a front or oblique direction; and as each laminae or fibre turns upon the axis of the quill, the least motion, when living, causes the feathers to change suddenly to the most opposite hues. Thus the one from Nootka Sound changes its expanded throat from the most vivid fire-colour to light green; the Topaz-throated does the same; and the Mexican Star changes from bright crimson to blue.

The sexes vary greatly in the plumage in many of the species; so much so that it is with difficulty we recognise them. The male and female of the Mexican Star could not

have been known had they not been seen constantly together, and proved to be so by dissection. They breed in Mexico in June and July; and the nest is a beautiful specimen of the architectural talent of these birds: it is neatly constructed with cotton, or the down of thistles, to which is fastened on the outside, by some glutinous substance, a white flat lichen resembling ours.

The female lays two eggs, perfectly white, and large for the size of the bird; and the Indians informed me they were hatched in three weeks by the male and female sitting alternately. When attending their young, they attack any bird indiscriminately that approaches the nest. Their motions, when under the influence of anger or fear, are very violent, and their flight rapid as an arrow; the eye cannot follow them, but the shrill piercing shriek which they utter on the wing may be heard when the bird is invisible,

which sound often led to their destruction by preparing me for their approach. They attack the eyes of the larger birds, and their sharp needle-like bill is a truly formidable weapon in this kind of warfare. Nothing can exceed their fierceness when one of their own species invades their territory during the breeding season. Under the influence of jealousy they become perfect furies; their throats swell, their crests, tails, and wings expand; they fight in the air (uttering a shrill noise) till one falls exhausted to the ground. I witnessed a combat of this kind near Otumba, during a heavy fall of rain, every separate drop of which I supposed sufficient to have beaten the puny warriors to the earth.

In sleeping they frequently suspend themselves by the feet, with their heads downwards, in the manner of some parrots.

These birds were great favourites of the

ancient Mexicans. They used the feathers as ornaments for their superb mantles in the time of Montezuma, and in embroidering the pictures so much extolled by Cortez. Their name signifies in the Indian language beams or locks of the sun;—and their feathers are still worn by the Indian ladies as ornaments for the ears.

CHAPTER XXI.

Agriculture.—Wheat.—Barley.—Indian Corn, or Maize.—
Fricollis.—Bananas.—The Great Aloe.—Pulque.

THE agriculturists of New Spain, like their artists and manufacturers, are considerably behind those of Europe. The fineness of the soil and climate renders less labour and management necessary than with us; and the laying of manure on the land seems to be little practised. The outskirts of the cities furnish this article in abundance, yet it remains unemployed. Irrigation has been used from the earliest period. In ploughing, a simple wooden plough, pointed with iron, is used, which is drawn by two oxen, fastened to it by the horns; it is directed by an Indian,

with one hand, whilst with the other he urges the animals forward, with a stick armed with a point; this is the general practice when ploughing for maize; but when employed for wheat, a smaller plough-share is introduced.

The coa or spade is a simple triangular instrument of wood, armed with iron, and is used with great dexterity by the Indians.

The wheat is the finest I have ever seen. The fields of it are very extensive, and the grain is trodden out by mules, as it was formerly in Europe, and as it still is in Egypt, by oxen.

Barley is not much in request, but it is sometimes given to horses, principally in a green state, instead of maize. I have no doubt but that excellent malt might be made from it.

The Indian corn, or maize, is very generally cultivated; from it is produced the

supply of bread for the great mass of the people. It is made into thin cakes, by soaking in water, and grinding it into paste between stones. It is then baked on a stone over a fire, and makes an excellent and nutritious bread.

Small black beans called *fricollis* are in general demand all over New Spain: they form a part of every meal, and even strangers think them excellent. Immense fields of these are cultivated for the supply of the great cities.

Potatoes are not in common use, and are small and not well tasted; nor does the cultivation of these, or of other culinary vegetables, seem to be well understood; for, although all sorts are grown here, and are to be procured in the markets, yet most of them are inferior to the same species in the kitchen-gardens of Europe. I should except the onions (which are as white as turnips and

very mild); cauliflowers and cabbages are also fine.

The tropical fruits are not, I think, to be surpassed in any other part of the world. I have already mentioned, in my account of the markets, their very luxuriant appearance: few objects can give more pleasure to the newly arrived European. But those fruits that were originally imported from Europe are by no means equal to our own. This, however, I am convinced, is principally owing to want of attention, and knowledge in the art of cultivating them. The whole management, as I have previously hinted, is confided to Indians entirely ignorant of the European arts of horticulture; and the engrafting of fruit trees has not yet, I believe, been introduced.

The banana (the musa) is extensively cultivated, and of great importance, furnishing the inhabitants in the warmer parts with a wholesome aliment. It is sold in the market

of the capital both fresh and in a dried state.

The great American aloe (*Agava Americana*), called here the maguey, is of the greatest consequence to the Mexicans, and very largely cultivated from Perote to Toluca, and I believe much further. From it is made the refreshing beverage called pulque. It is in universal request among the inhabitants of the capital, Puebla, Toluca, &c., and such is the consumption of it, that the three cities just mentioned are said by Baron Humboldt to have paid duties upon it to the amount of 817,739 dollars in the year 1793. Plantations of the agava are very extensive between Chollula and San Martin, the great road running for miles through them. The plants are set about five or six feet asunder, and in favourable situations come into bloom in about ten years, at which period the valuable liquor they produce is to be procured. As

soon as the cultivator perceives the plant preparing to throw up its long flower-stem, he cuts out the leaves which form its centre, and hollows it out into the shape of a bowl, at the same time removing most of the other leaves, so that the whole sap destined for their supply flows to the great stem, and is received by the bowl-shaped cavity, into which it runs with such rapidity as to require to be emptied several times a day, for a space of two months. The liquor, when collected, is placed in jars or skins; it undergoes a slight fermentation, which takes place in a few days, and it is then fit for immediate drinking. Strangers prefer it when fresh, but the natives seldom use it till it has acquired a strong taste, and a disagreeable fetid smell, denominated fuerte, when it is esteemed in high perfection.

A strong spirit, called pulque brandy, is distilled from this liquor. The leaves of the maguey form the roofs of some of the Indian

houses, and their fences ; ropes, thread, cloth, and paper, are also made from it ; some part of the plant is also used medicinally, and the root, prepared with sugar, is converted into dulces or sweetmeats.

Sugar is made by the Indians in most parts of Mexico, though formerly imported from Spain. It is sold in small cakes, at a very reasonable rate. Aguardiente, a spirit resembling whiskey, is obtained from the canes in large quantities. Coffee is grown, though not very generally ; I saw some of an excellent sort, within three leagues of Xalapa : and during my stay, an English gentleman was in treaty for an extensive hacienda, with the intention of cultivating this plant on a large scale.

Cotton of a very fine quality is abundantly produced in most of the warm parts, but it is manufactured to great disadvantage by the natives. A variety, of a fine cinnamon

colour, is sold by the Indians ; it is abundant at Themascaltepec, and is, I believe, the same as that of which the East India nankeen is made. The machine for extracting the seed is not known, and this troublesome process is here performed by hand. The Indians also expose for sale great quantities of coarse calico of their own manufacture.

Flax or hemp I did not see : the growth was discouraged by the Spaniards, though the temperate region is well adapted to their production. The same discouragement existed as to the manufacture of silk.

Chocolate, made from the cocoa, was in general use in America before the first arrival of Europeans, and is still held in high estimation. In Mexico the consumption of it is very great. It is manufactured in a simple manner, and is excellent. The cocoa is not, however, the growth of the country, but is imported from Guatemala and South America. It is

to be regretted that it is not commonly produced in Mexico, where it is so much an article of consumption. Chocolate may be procured on a journey, when scarcely any thing else can be had ; and is of superior flavour and more easy of digestion than any I ever met with elsewhere. In the capital great numbers of females are employed in making it ; which they do by grinding it by hand, between stones, in the same manner as the tortilios or maize cakes are made, and a laborious process it is. It is singular that the cultivation of the cocoa nut was, in the time of Montezuma, very general in Mexico, as several cities paid tribute in that produce, and the fruit passed current as the coin of the kingdom.

The well known drug of the apothecaries' shops, jalap (the *convolvulus jalapa*), is the produce of the temperate region, principally in the neighbourhood of Xalapa ; and hence its appellation, for the J and the X in the

Spanish language are *idem sonans* and interchangeable. From 200,000 to 300,000 pounds weight are annually exported to Europe. Yet although this drug has been so long known, it was only of late that the genus of the plant to which it belongs was ascertained.

Excellent tobacco is produced in many parts of Mexico, and it was used in the form of segars in such quantities as to yield, in the time of the Spaniards, a net revenue of £833,400; but, since the independence of the country has been declared, and the restrictions on its growth have been removed, the revenues arising from it have been lost to the state, whilst the people have been little benefited, as the price of segars remains nearly the same.

The best indigo known is raised at Guatemala. It is also found in various parts of New Spain, but its cultivation is much neglected.

Vanilla, the highly prized odoriferous pod, is obtained in the forests of Oaxaca and Vera Cruz, and it is exported exclusively from the latter place to the amount of 8,000 or 10,000 pounds annually. It is not, however, much used in the manufacture of chocolate in the country.

CHAPTER XXII.

Climate.

THE climate of New Spain varies more in different parts than that of any other portion of the globe of equal extent. The low situations near the shore are the hottest and most unhealthy. The ports of Vera Cruz and Acapulco are deserted by foreigners during the rainy season, which lasts from April or May till October; and indeed the natives, during this period, shut themselves up in their houses, or only leave them on the greatest emergencies. It is then that the yellow fever and black vomit make their ravages among the human species. Strangers, parti-

cularly young men from Europe, cannot remain with safety even for a day. During the short period I was in Mexico many who had arrived in the vessels from Liverpool died. One young man, named Lunn, who had married but a few days before he left England, anxious to place his wife in safety, immediately on his arrival pushed forward to Xalapa, where he left her, and returned to Vera Cruz to arrange his affairs: in three days she was a widow, in a strange land, without knowledge of the language, and without being known to a single person. Before the window of the apartment I occupied at Xalapa were exposed to the air the bedding and clothes of a young American, lately the occupant of the adjoining room. He had been taken ill at Vera Cruz, left it immediately in a litter, but arrived here only to die. Another youth from Europe, who had fled the miserable shore, died at Puebla just before our enter-

ing it. As these occurrences are common, the impression is less forcible :—but even the *hierreos*, or muleteers, have a dread of Vera Cruz, for to those accustomed to the Table-land it is almost as fatal as to strangers.

The Baron Humboldt has given a melancholy but true account of the principal seaports of this empire, taken from authentic records. After what he has said, it might be imagined that even commercial speculation would set a higher value on human life than to risk it in the intercourse with Vera Cruz. But it is only on the coast and a few leagues from it, and there principally to the newly arrived, that the climate proves so destructive of the human constitution. As you rise to the Table-land, the air begins perceptibly to cool, the face of vegetation altogether changes, the tropical plants disappear, and those belonging to temperate regions supply their places. On the contrary, in the journey from the ca-

pital to Vera Cruz, about four leagues beyond Xalapa, the suffocating heat commences, the oak tree is no longer to be seen, you enter the fever district, and the pestilential influence regularly increases as you approach the shore. This, however, chiefly applies to the rainy season, as at other times it may be visited with little apprehension. But at all times I should advise foreigners to remain on board their vessels as much as possible; for in the harbour there is not so much danger, probably in consequence of the cleanliness and good ventilation of the ships. The Rawlings, in which I sailed, with eight passengers and a crew of twenty men, remained several months in the bad season without the loss of a man; and the Phaeton frigate, in which I returned, with a complement of several hundred persons, passed three of the worst months on the coast with the loss of only one man, a midshipman, who died in Tampico. I should advise the

stranger to have a carriage in readiness to transport him into the interior without loss of time, for exposure to the sun in the heated streets of Vera Cruz must always be attended with danger to the new comer. Another thing I should recommend is to avoid the great inn, or posada, opposite the landing place ; it may be as well regulated a house as most of the Spanish inns ; but it is very objectionable from the continual crowd of people ; the noise and confusion of its billiard-rooms, and the confined and otherwise bad accommodation of the sleeping apartments ; but, above all, the stranger is here constantly reminded of the number of foreigners who have died in the house, and this so depresses the mind as to unfit the body to resist the contagion of disease.

On my return to Vera Cruz from Mexico I applied to the Franciscan convent, only a few doors to the north of the inn, and they received

me into their large, airy, and comparatively cool house—which faces the sea, is well ventilated, and has the best water in the city. The good fathers keep a plentiful table;—you have your choice of society, and can enjoy exercise in the sheltered cloisters of the establishment.

When the traveller who has been compelled to remain in Vera Cruz amidst contagion and death approaches the salubrious Xalapa, and is assured by the appearance of the green oaks that he has left behind him the district of fever, with what pleasure does he inhale the temperate air, and view the verdant hills that surround the city,—than which a more healthy and delightful spot does not exist upon the face of the globe. Here a perpetual spring reigns, verdure continuing throughout the year, the woods are never unclothed, vegetable productions are always to be obtained in the markets, and fruits and blossoms are to be seen at the same time.

The cottage of the Indian is only intended as a shelter from the rain, for the extremes of heat and cold are alike unknown to him; and should the passing storm invade his cage-like house, a mat spread to the windward affords him sufficient protection. Having reached the Table-land, the traveller has now nothing to fear from heat: indeed, at Perote, and other places similarly situated, he may in the mornings and evenings experience the reverse of that temperature, for, at this height, a few miles only make a great difference, according as you rise or descend: in Mexico itself the climate throughout the year equals the best part of our month of May, the mean degree of heat on the Table-land being between sixty-five and seventy of Fahrenheit.

High winds are so little known here, that I never experienced any thing like a storm during my residence. Earthquakes, however, are not unusual, though they are seldom

attended with danger. In the month of April I was awakened by a smart shock, followed by a tremulous motion, as if a person had been shaking the bed on which I was sleeping: the whole house was alarmed, but I heard of no damage in the city, though at Themascaltepec it had injured the church, and displaced some of the statues from the niches on its front.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Ancient Mexico.

IT was my intention to have mentioned nothing in this little work that had not come under my own immediate observation ; but as it may be thought necessary in a description of Mexico to say something of its ancient state, concerning which, from the various contradictory accounts, so little can be depended on, I have been induced to alter my resolution to a certain extent. Therefore, after examining the few remaining monuments of ancient art which still exist in the capital, as well as those of more importance in Tezcuco and its neighbourhood, and also the collection of

drawings, in the Minería, (made by order of the Spanish government), of most of the like subjects which are still to be found in the provinces, and having consulted the various authors whose works appear worthy of notice, I have selected the following passages from the labours of the Abbe Clavigero, of whose account, as well as that of Bernal Dias, I have not the smallest reason to doubt the authenticity, as the remains at Tezcucó and other places in the vicinity confirm all they have said of the magnificence of the ancient capital. The mutilated map of the original city, in the state in which it was found by Cortez on his first arrival, is believed to be the only authentic document at present existing that can convey any idea of the size and regularity of its plan. This map is now unfortunately only a fragment, but still it is sufficient to prove the superiority of the ancient capital to the modern city raised by

the Spaniards on its ruins. It stood, at that time, like Venice, on a number of small islands in the lake, from which it is now, owing to the receding of the waters, distant about two miles. Bernal Dias, when looking down on the city from the top of the great Teocalli or Temple, compares it, from its regular division into squares, to an immense chess-board. This division appears to have been copied in the present city, which does not, however, contain one half so many squares as are depicted on the fragments of the ancient map. These squares seem to have been surrounded either by paved roads, or canals which could be passed by canoes, the former being marked by footsteps, and the latter by curled waves. In each of the squares or divisions was a temple, the name of which, in the Aztec character, was placed over it, and this also has been translated into the Spanish language, and is probably in the

hand-writing of Boturini, in whose collection this curious document formed a prominent feature, though it was even then mutilated and torn in the middle, and is so described in his catalogue of the valuable antiquities he then possessed. In a copy of the map given in the first edition of this work, the dotted lines denote the supposed continuation of the squares ; but somewhere near the centre was the site of the great temple, which has probably occasioned some devotee long since to destroy that part. On the border on one side of the map is represented a line of ancient kings and caziques, with some of the Spaniards ; and on the opposite side, the remains of figures on horseback are strong proofs of its having been made after the Conquest, which is confirmed by the first Christian church of St. Maria being also represented on it, as well as several temples.

The history of the conquest of this extensive

empire is too well known to be repeated in a work of this kind, but it is probably requisite, previous to describing its existing antiquities, to give some idea of the state of the ancient capital and the magnificence of the monarch who then governed it, which the following selections will, it is hoped, in some measure convey.

“ALL the servants of his palace consisted of persons of rank. Besides those who constantly lived in it, every morning six hundred feudatory lords and nobles came to pay court to him. They passed the whole day in the antechamber, where none of their servants were permitted to enter, conversing in a low voice, and waiting the orders of their sovereign. The servants who accompanied those lords were so numerous as to occupy three small courts of the palace, and many waited in the streets. The women about the court were not less in number, including those of rank,

servants, and slaves. All this numerous female tribe lived shut up in a kind of seraglio, under the care of some noble matrons, who watched over their conduct; as these kings were extremely jealous, and every piece of misconduct which happened in the palace, however slight, was severely punished. Of these women the king retained those who pleased him, the others he gave away, as a recompence for the services of his vassals. All the feudatories of the crown were obliged to reside for some months of the year at the court; and, at their return to their states, to leave their sons or brothers behind them, as hostages, which the king demanded as a security for their fidelity; on which account they were required to keep houses in Mexico.

“The forms and ceremonials introduced at court were another effect of the despotism of Montezuma. No one would enter the palace, either to serve the king, or to confer with him

on any business, without pulling off his shoes and stockings at the gate. No person was allowed to appear before the king in any pompous dress, as it was deemed a want of respect to majesty; consequently the greatest lords, excepting the nearest relations of the king, stripped themselves of the rich dress which they wore, or at least covered it with one more ordinary, to show their humility before him. All persons, on entering the hall of audience, and before speaking to the king, made three bows, saying at the first, lord; at the second, my lord; and at the third, great lord. They spoke low, and with the head inclined, and received the answer which the king gave them, by means of his secretaries, as attentively and humbly as if it had been the voice of an oracle. In taking leave, no person ever turned his back upon the throne.

“The audience-hall served also for his dining-room. The table was a large pillow,

and his seat a low chair. The table-cloth, napkins, and towels were of cotton, but very fine, white, and always perfectly clean. The kitchen-utensils were of the earthenware of Chollula ; but none of these things ever served him more than once, as immediately after, he gave them to one of his nobles. The cups in which they prepared his chocolate, and other drinks of the cocoa, were of gold, or some beautiful sea shell, or naturally formed vessels curiously varnished, of which we shall speak hereafter. He had gold plate, but it was used only on certain festivals, in the temple. The number and variety of dishes at his table amazed the Spaniards who saw them. The conqueror Cortez says that they covered the floor of a great hall, and that there were dishes of every kind of game, fish, fruit, and herbs of that country. Three or four hundred noble youths carried this dinner in form ; presented it as soon as the king sat down to

table, and immediately retired; and, that it might not grow cold, every dish was accompanied with its chafing-dish. The king marked, with a rod which he had in his hand, the meats which he chose, and the rest were distributed among the nobles who were in the antechamber. Before he sat down, four of the most beautiful women of his seraglio presented water to him to wash his hands, and continued standing all the time of his dinner, together with six of his principal ministers, and his carver.

“As soon as the king sat down to table, the carver shut the door of the hall, that none of the other nobles might see him eat. The ministers stood at a distance, and kept a profound silence, unless when they made answer to what the king said. The carver and the four women served the dishes to him, besides two others who brought him bread made of maize baked with eggs. He frequently heard music during the time of his meal, and was

entertained with the humorous sayings of some deformed men whom he kept out of mere state. He showed much satisfaction in hearing them, and observed that, among their jests, they frequently pronounced some important truth. When his dinner was over he took tobacco mixed with liquid amber, in a pipe or reed beautifully varnished, and with the smoke of it put himself to sleep.

“After having slept a little, upon the same low chair, he gave audience, and listened attentively to all that was communicated to him, and answered every one by his ministers or secretaries. After giving audience, he was entertained with music, being much delighted with hearing the glorious actions of his ancestors sung. At other times he amused himself with seeing various games played, of which we shall speak hereafter. When he went abroad, he was carried on the shoulders of the nobles in a litter covered with a rich

canopy, attended by a numerous retinue of courtiers; and wherever he passed, every person stopped with their eyes shut, as if they feared to be dazzled with the splendour of majesty. When he alighted from the litter, to walk on foot, they spread carpets, that he might not touch the earth with his feet.

“ The grandeur and magnificence of his palaces, houses of pleasure, woods, and gardens, were correspondent to this majesty. The palace of his usual residence was a vast edifice of stone and lime, which had twenty doors to the public squares and streets; three great courts, in one of which was a beautiful fountain; several halls, and more than a hundred chambers. Some of the apartments had walls of marble and other valuable kinds of stone. The beams were of cedar, cypress, and other excellent woods, well finished and carved. Among the halls there was one so large that, according to the testimony of an

eye-witness of veracity, it could contain three thousand people. Besides this palace he had others, both within and without the capital. In Mexico, besides the seraglio for his wives, there was lodging for all his ministers and counsellors, and all the officers of his household and court: and also accommodation for foreign lords who arrived there, and particularly for the two allied kings.

“ Two houses in Mexico he appropriated to animals; the one for birds which did not live by prey; the other for those of prey, quadrupeds, and reptiles. There were several chambers belonging to the first, and galleries supported on pillars of marble all of one piece. These galleries looked towards a garden, where, in the midst of some shrubbery, ten fish-ponds were formed, some of them of fresh water for the aquatic birds of rivers, and others of salt water for those of the sea. In other parts of the house were all sorts of

birds, in such number and variety as to strike the Spaniards with wonder, who could not believe there was any species in the world wanting to the collection. They were supplied with the same food which they fed upon while they enjoyed their liberty, whether seeds, fruits, or insects. For those birds who lived on fish only, the daily consumption was ten Castilian *pesos* of fish, (according to the testimony of the conqueror Cortez, in his letters to Charles V.), which is more than three hundred Roman pounds. Three hundred men, says Cortez, were employed to take care of those birds, besides their physicians, who observed their distempers and applied timely remedies to them. Of those three hundred men, some procured them their food, others distributed it, others took care of their eggs at the time of their incubation, and others picked their plumage at certain seasons of the year; for, besides the pleasure which the king

took in seeing so great a multitude of animals collected together, he was principally careful of their feathers, not less for the sake of the famous Mosaic images, of which we shall speak hereafter, than of the other works which were made of them. The halls and chambers of those houses were so many in number, as the conqueror above mentioned attests, that they could have accommodated two great princes with all their retinue. This celebrated house was situated in the place where, at present, the great convent of St. Francis stands.

“ The other house, appropriated to the wild animals, had a large and handsome court, with a chequered pavement, and was divided into various apartments. One of them contained all the birds of prey, from the royal eagle to the kestrel, and many individuals of every species. These birds were distributed, according to their species, in various subterraneous chambers, which were more than seven

feet deep, and upwards of seventeen in length and breadth. The half of every chamber was covered with flat stones: and stakes were fixed in the wall, on which they might sleep, and be defended from rain. The other half of the chamber was only covered with a lattice, through which they enjoyed the light of the sun. For the support of these birds, were killed, daily, near five hundred turkeys. In the same house were many low halls filled with a great number of strong wooden cages, in which lions, tigers, wolves, cayatoo, and wild cats were confined, and all other kinds of wild beasts; which were fed upon deer, rabbits, hares, techichis, and other animals, and the intestines of human sacrifices.

“ The king of Mexico not only kept all the species of animals which other princes do for state, but likewise such as by nature seemed exempted from slavery—namely, crocodiles and serpents. The serpents were kept in

large casks or vessels ; the crocodiles in ponds, which were walled round. There were also various ponds for fish, two of which, that are remaining and still beautiful, we have seen in the palace of Chapoltepec, two miles from Mexico.

“ Montezuma, who was not satisfied with having every sort of animal in his palace, also collected there all irregularly formed men, who, either from the colour of their hair or of their skin, or some other deformity in their persons, were oddities of their species. A humour this, however, not unattended with beneficial consequences, as it gave maintenance to a number of miserable objects, and delivered them from the inhuman insults of their other fellow-creatures.

“ All his palaces were surrounded with beautiful gardens, where there was every kind of beautiful flower, odoriferous herb, and medicinal plant. He had likewise woods,

enclosed with walls and furnished with variety of game, in which he frequently sported. One of these woods was upon an island in the lake, known at present, among the Spaniards, by the name of Piñon.

“Of all these palaces, gardens, and woods, there is now remaining the wood of Chapultepec only, which the Spanish Viceroy has preserved for their pleasure. All the others were destroyed by the conquerors. They laid in ruins the most magnificent buildings of antiquity, sometimes from an indiscreet zeal for religion, sometimes in revenge, or to make use of their materials. They neglected the cultivation of the royal gardens, cut down the woods, and reduced the country to such a state, that the magnificence of its former kings could not now find belief, were it not confirmed by the testimony of those who were the causes of its annihilation.

“Not only the palaces, but all the other places of pleasure, were kept in exquisite order and neatness, even those which were seldom or never visited; as there was nothing in which he took more pride than the cleanliness of his own person, and of every thing else which was his. He bathed regularly every day, and had baths, therefore, in all his palaces. Every day he wore four dresses; and that which he once put off he never after used again: these were reserved as largesses for the nobles who served him and the soldiers who behaved gallantly in war. Every morning, according to the accounts given by some historians, upwards of a thousand men were employed by him in sweeping and watering the streets of the city.

“In one of the royal buildings was an armoury filled with all kinds of offensive and defensive arms which were made use of by those nations, with military ornaments and

ensigns. He kept a surprising number of artificers at work, in manufacturing these and other things. He had numerous artists constantly busied likewise, namely, goldsmiths, mosaic workmen, sculptors, painters, and others. One whole district consisted solely of dancing masters, who were trained up to entertain him.

“The number of the images by which their false gods were represented and worshipped, in the temples, the houses, the streets, and the woods, was infinite. Zumarraga affirms that the Franciscans had, in the course of eight years, broken more than twenty thousand idols; but that number is trifling compared to those of the capital only. They were generally made of clay and certain kinds of stone and wood; but sometimes, too, of gold and other metals; and there were some of gems. In a high mountain of Achi-auhtla, in Mizteca, Benedict Fernandez, a

celebrated Dominican missionary, found a little idol called by the Miztecas *The Heart of the People*. It was a very precious emerald, four inches long and two inches broad, upon which was engraved the figure of a bird, and round it that of a little snake. The Spaniards offered fifteen hundred sequins for it; but the zealous missionary, before all the people, and with great solemnity, reduced it to powder. The most extraordinary idol of the Mexicans was that of Huitzilopochtli, which was made of certain seeds pasted together with human blood. Almost all their idols were coarse and hideous, from the fantastical parts of which they were composed, in order to represent their attributes and employments."

* * * *

"This great temple occupied the centre of the city; and, together with the other temples and buildings annexed to it, com-

prehended all that space upon which the great cathedral church now stands, part of the greater market-place, and part likewise of the streets and buildings around. Within the enclosure of the wall which encompassed it in a square form, the conqueror Cortez affirms that a town of five hundred houses might have stood. The wall, built of stone and lime, was very thick, eight feet high, crowned with battlements, in the form of niches, and ornamented with many stone figures in the shape of serpents, whence it obtained the name of *coatepantli*, or the wall of serpents. It had four gates to the four cardinal points: the eastern gate looked to a broad street which led to the lake of Tezcuco: the rest corresponded to the three principal streets of the city, the broadest and the straightest, which formed a continuation with those built upon the lake that led to Izta-palapan, to Tacuba, and to Tepejacaë."

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“Zumarraga, the first bishop of Mexico, says, in a letter of the 12th of June, 1531, addressed to the general chapter of his order, that in that capital alone twenty thousand human victims were annually sacrificed. Some authors, quoted by Gomara, affirm that the number of the sacrificed amounted to fifty thousand. Acosta writes, that there was a certain day of the year on which five thousand were sacrificed in different places of the empire; and another day on which they sacrificed twenty thousand. Some authors believe that, on the mountain Tepejaca, alone, twenty thousand were sacrificed to the goddess Tonantzin.”

* * * *

“The most frequent oblation, however, was that of Copal. All daily burned incense to their idols; no house was without censers. The priests in the temple, fathers of families in their houses, and judges in their tribunals, whenever they pronounced sentence in an

important cause, whether civil or criminal, offered incense to the four principal winds. But incense-offering among the Mexicans, and other nations of Anahuac, was not only an act of religion towards their gods, but also a piece of civil courtesey to lords and ambassadors."

* * * *

"There was no fixed place for burials: many ordered their ashes to be buried near to some temple or altar, some in the fields, and others in those sacred places of the mountains where sacrifices used to be made. The ashes of the kings and lords were, for the most part, deposited in the towers of the temples, especially in those of the greater temple. Close to Teotihuacan, where there were many temples, there were also innumerable sepulchres. The tombs of those whose bodies had been buried entire, agreeably to the testimony of the anonymous conqueror

who saw them, were deep ditches, formed with stone and lime, within which they placed the bodies in a sitting posture upon *icpalli*, or low seats, together with the instruments of their art or profession. If it was the sepulchre of any military person, they laid a shield and sword by him; if of a woman, a spindle, a weaver's shuttle, and a *xicalli*, which was a certain naturally formed vessel, of which we shall say more hereafter. In the tombs of the rich they put gold and jewels, but all were provided with eatables for the long journey they had to make. The Spanish conquerors, knowing of the gold which was buried with the Mexican lords in their tombs, dug up several, and found considerable quantities of that precious metal. Cortez says, in his letters, that at one entry which he made into the capital, when it was besieged by his army, his soldiers found fifteen hundred *castellanos*, that is, two hundred

and forty ounces of gold, in one sepulchre, which was in the tower of a temple. The anonymous conqueror says also, that he was present at the digging up of another sepulchre, from which they took about three thousand *castellanos*."

* * * *

"The Mexican empire abounded with all those kinds of paintings; for their painters were innumerable, and there was hardly any thing left unpainted. If those had been preserved, there would have been nothing wanting to the history of Mexico; but the first preachers of the gospel, suspicious that superstition was mixed with all their paintings, made a furious destruction of them. Of all those which were to be found in Tezucuo, where the chief school of painting was, they collected such a mass, in the square of the market, it appeared like a little mountain; to this they set fire, and buried in the ashes

the memory of many most interesting and curious events. The loss of those monuments of antiquity was inexpressibly afflicting to the Indians, and regretted sufficiently afterwards by the authors of it, when they became sensible of their error; for they were compelled to endeavour to remedy the evil, in the first place, by obtaining information from the mouths of the Indians; secondly, by collecting all the paintings which had escaped their fury, to illustrate the history of the nation; but although they recovered many, these were not sufficient; for, from that time forward, the possessors of paintings became so jealous of their preservation and concealment from the Spaniards, it has proved difficult, if not impossible, to make them part with one of them.

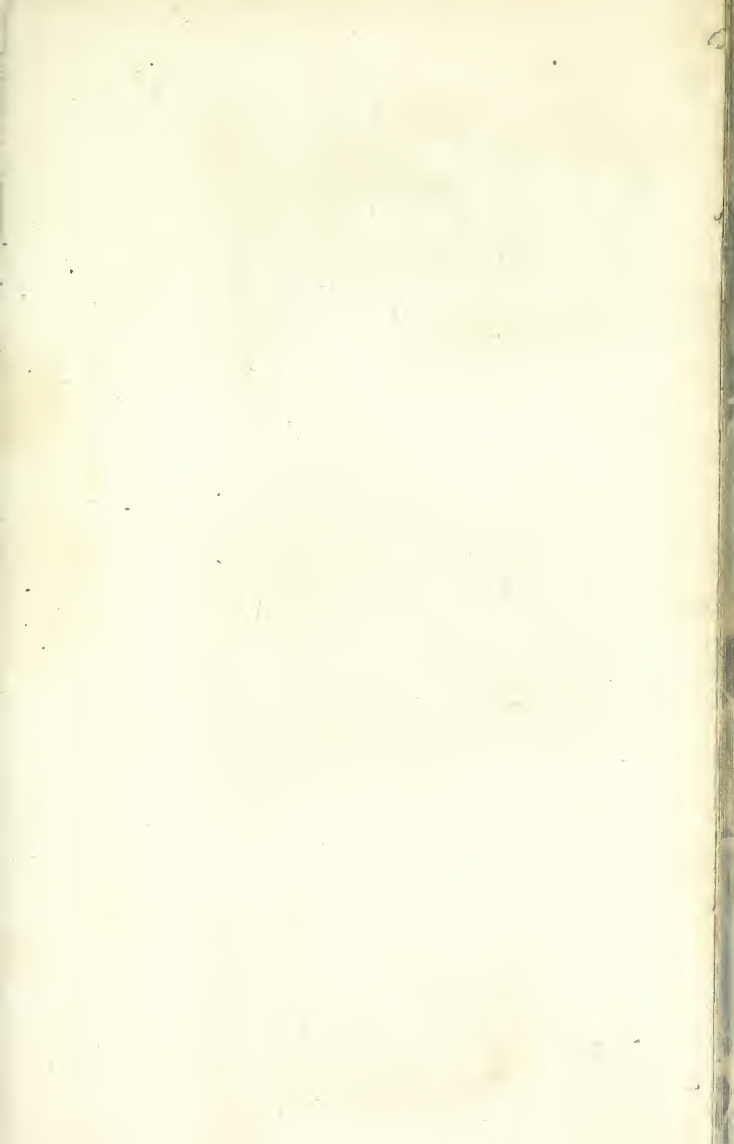
“The cloth on which they painted was made of the thread of the maguey, or aloe, or the palm *icxotl*, dressed skins, or paper.

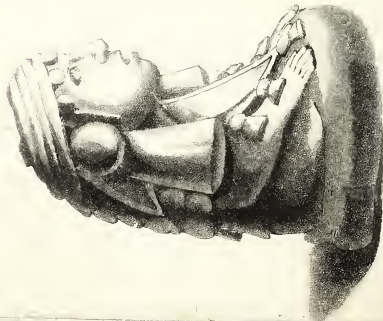
They made paper of the leaves of a certain species of aloe, steeped together like hemp, and afterwards washed, stretched, and smoothed. They made also of the palm *icxotl*, and the thin barks of other trees, when united and prepared with a certain gum, both silk and cotton: but we are unable to explain any particulars of this manufacture. We have had in our hands several sheets of Mexican paper: it is similar in the thickness to the pasteboard of Europe, but softer, smoother, and easy for writing."

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"In this respect we have also to lament the furious zeal of the first bishop of Mexico, and the first preachers of the gospel; who, in order to remove from the sight of their converts all incentives to idolatry, have deprived us of many valuable monuments of the sculpture of the Mexicans. The foundation of the first church which was built in

Mexico was laid with idols, and so many thousand statues were then broken in pieces and destroyed, that, although the kingdom was most abounding in works of that kind, at present the most diligent search can hardly find any of them remaining. The conduct of those missionaries was no doubt laudable both in cause and effect, but they should have distinguished between the innocent statues of those people and their superstitious images; that some of the former might have been kept entire in some place where no evil consequence would have attended their preservation."





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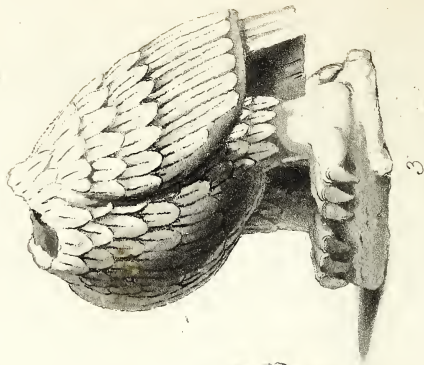
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ANCIENT MEXICAN SCULPTURE. Plate 1.





ANCIENT MEXICAN SCULPTURE. Plate 2.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Antiquities.

BARON HUMBOLDT states that the objects worthy the notice of the antiquarian are—the great Calendar and Sacrificial Stones in the Plaza Major, the colossal statue of the Goddess Teoyamiqui in the gallery of the University, the Aztec monuments in hieroglyphic pictures, and the two pyramids of San Juan de Teotihuacan. Of the two first I have brought home casts, taken from the subjects themselves by permission of the government. Of the pyramids I made models on the spot, and of the manuscripts and hieroglyphic pictures sent to Montezuma to announce

to him the transactions, and progress of the Spaniards, I have brought over several ; and, what is of more consequence to the antiquarian and historian, the before-mentioned original map of the ancient city, made by order of the Emperor for Cortez, and intended to have been transmitted by him to the King of Spain.

I also procured a great number of the ancient statues and idols in stone and burnt earth, sacred vessels, and other ornaments of the temples, with several of the domestic implements, and a variety of ancient documents of great interest, from which the public will be enabled to acquire information respecting the aboriginal inhabitants. But Mexico still possesses many objects of study for the antiquary, for sculptured idols are to be found in many parts of the city. The corner-stone of the building now occupied by the lottery-office, and fronting the market for shoes, is the head of the serpent-idol, of great mag-

nitude, which I should judge was not, when entire, less than seventy feet in length. Under the gateway of the house, nearly opposite the entrance to the mint, is a fine statue, in a recumbent posture, of a deity, bearing the human form, and ornamented with various symbols; it is about the size of life, and was found a few years since in digging a well. The house at the corner of a street at the south-east side of the great square is built upon and in part supported by a fine circular altar of black basalt, ornamented with the tail and claws of a gigantic reptile. In the cloisters behind the Dominican convent is a noble specimen of the great serpent-idol, almost perfect, and of fine workmanship: this monstrous divinity is represented in the act of swallowing a human victim, which is seen crushed and struggling in its horrid jaws.

The ancient MSS. or pictures, executed by

order of Montezuma by the best artists of his kingdom, and which conveyed intelligence of the movements of the Spaniards, are chiefly drawn upon skins of deer, though some are upon a species of paper made of the fibres of the great American aloe. They are articles of such interest, and so much prized by the government, that, though I experienced from the public authorities the greatest liberality, and every assistance in my pursuit of information concerning the ancient state of the country, yet no offers of mine could induce them to part with these MSS. until I had given them an assurance that, after they had been copied in England, I would transmit them again to Mexico.

I have likewise been so fortunate as to procure some of the pictures of Indian antiquities formerly in the collection of the celebrated and ill-used Chevalier Boturini. They were done from pictures executed at the time

of Cortez, and by his order, representing his contests with the natives, his residence in the capital, and other subjects connected with the Conquest.

In the Minería is a fine collection of drawings of most of the remaining antiquities. I procured permission to copy them by an order from the minister Don Lucas Alaman, directed to Professor Don Jose Maria Bustamente. They represent the remains of pyramids, castles, fortifications, temples, bridges, houses, statues, basso-relievos, and idols. They were executed in consequence of an *Expedicion Real Antiquario hecho en el Reyno de Mexico, por el Capitan Dupaix*. The captain was accompanied by Signior Luciano Castanedo Callijon de la Condeva, who is still living, and possesses many of the original sketches.

In these drawings some of the towers are represented as seven stories high; one of the

bridges has a pointed arch, which is formed of two stones only, and some of the door-ways have circular tops.

The drawings of the city of Palenque prove it to have been a magnificent place. The engravings that were taken from them and published in London last year are tolerably correct, as far as they extend, but they are incomplete. The windows are represented as arched, which is not the case, as their heads are square, although the door is rounded.

The Mineria also contains a collection of antiquities, consisting principally of copper and stone adzes, spears, arrow-heads, &c., all of which greatly resemble those of an early period, that have been found in Europe.

There are several fine busts ;—one, colossal, of a man in the same cap as that represented on the head of a boy, which I have brought with me. Some have teeth of a white

china-like substance, and the eyes of others are of different-coloured stones ; a peculiarity common to most of the Mexican statues.

Beads of jade and bloodstone have been found, but no other precious stones that I could hear of, although many are enumerated, as well as pearls, among the presents sent by Montezuma to the Spaniards. Cortez, in his celebrated letters to the king of Spain, greatly extols the Mexican workmanship in gold, numerous specimens of which he transmitted to Spain ; but I could not learn that any thing of this kind exists at the present time in either public or private collections. What was sent to Spain, however exquisite the workmanship, was melted by order of the government ; for, from the earliest period to the last day of her possessing power in Mexico, Spain studiously kept from the rest of the world all information relative to her American dominions, and more particularly of New Spain.

The only works of art of the inhabitants of the city of Mexico before the Conquest, then called Tenochtitlan, now publicly seen, are the great Calendar stone, popularly called Montezuma's watch, and the Sacrificial stone, or the grand altar, once standing in the great temple before the principal idol. The former measures twelve feet in diameter, and is cut from one large block of porous basaltic stone. It is supposed to have been placed in the roof of the great temple in the same manner as the Zodiac was in the temple of Tentyra in Upper Egypt. It now stands against the north-west wall of the cathedral, and is an attractive object of antiquarian research, and a striking proof of the perfection the nation to which it belonged had attained in some of the sciences:—few persons, even of the most enlightened cities of Europe, of the present day, would be capable of executing such a work.

From the first moment I beheld it, I determined, if possible, to convey to Europe a fac-simile of so fine a specimen of Aztec skill. Through the influence of Don Lucas Alaman, the prime minister, I obtained permission of the clergy to erect a scaffold against the cathedral, and took an impression of it in plaster, which was afterwards carefully packed up, and with some difficulty conveyed to Vera Cruz. It has fortunately arrived safely in England, and now forms one of the subjects of the Exhibition of Ancient Mexico to be seen in the Egyptian Hall.

The Sacrificial stone, or altar, is buried in the square of the cathedral, within a hundred yards of the Calendar stone. The upper surface only is exposed to view, which seems to have been done designedly, to impress upon the populace an abhorrence of the horrible and sanguinary rites once performed on this very altar. It is said by

writers that 30,000 human victims were sacrificed at the coronation of Montezuma. Kirwan, in the preface to his *Metaphysics*, states the annual number of human victims immolated in Mexico to be 2500. I have seen the Indians themselves, as they pass, throw stones at it; and I once saw a boy jump upon it, clinch his fist, stamp with his foot, and use other gesticulations of the greatest abhorrence. As I had been informed that the sides were covered with historical sculpture, I applied to the clergy for the further permission of having the earth removed from around it, which they not only granted, but moreover had it performed for me at their own expense. I then took casts of the whole.—It is twenty-five feet in circumference, and consists of fifteen groups of figures, representing the conquests of the warriors of Mexico over different cities, the names of which are written over them. More information is to be acquired from these

figures, respecting the gaudy costumes of the ancient warriors, than can be obtained elsewhere. During the time the operation of taking the casts was going on, (and it occupied several days), the populace surrounded the place, and, although they behaved with great decorum and civility, they would frequently express their surprise as to the motives that could induce me to take so much pains in copying these stones; and several wished to be informed whether the English, whom they did not consider to be Christians, worshipped the same Gods as the Mexicans did before their conversion. I availed myself of the publicity this operation gave to my pursuits, to offer to purchase any articles of curiosity from the Indians, or to reward those who could procure me intelligence of the existence of any such. The consequence was, that various articles which had been

long carefully concealed were brought to light. Such as were portable I purchased, and of others I took casts and drawings, to enable me to make fac-similes on my return to England.*

The largest and most celebrated of the Mexican deities was known to be buried under the gallery of the University. With some difficulty the spot was ascertained; application was then made to the heads of the College through the politeness of Señor Del Rio, Professor of Mineralogy, and the great Goddess was disinterred at the expense of the University. It was the labour of a few hours only, and I had the pleasure of witnessing the resurrection of this horrible deity, before

* I have since been informed that the Government are forming a public Museum in Mexico, and have strictly forbidden the removal of any antiquities from the country.

whom tens of thousands of human victims had been sacrificed, in the religious and sanguinary fervour of its infatuated worshippers.

All who have read (and who has not ?) the relation of Cortez of the transactions of the siege of Mexico must have shuddered at the horrid recital of the enormities committed on those who were unfortunately made captives by the natives. The heart, still panting with life, was taken by the priest from the breast, and deemed the more acceptable to the deity if it still smoked with life : the mangled limbs of the victim were then divided amongst the crowd as a feast worthy of the goddess.

In the night of desolation, called by the Spaniards *Noche Triste*, in which many were made prisoners by the Mexicans, the adventurous Cortez, and his few remaining companions in arms, were horror-stricken by witnessing the cruel manner in which their cap-

tive fellow-adventurers were dragged to the Sacrificial stone, and their hearts, yet warm with vitality, presented by the priests to the gods; the more heart-rending the cries of the victims, the more grateful the sacrifice to this monster representative of deformity and carnage.

Some writers have accused the Spanish authors of exaggeration in their accounts of the religious ceremonies of this, in other respects, enlightened people; but a view of the idol under consideration will of itself be sufficient to dispel any doubts on the subject. It is scarcely possible for the most ingenious artist to have conceived a statue better adapted to the intended purpose; and the united talents and imagination of Brughel and Fuseli would in vain have attempted to improve it.

This colossal and horrible monster is hewn out of one solid block of basalt, nine feet high, its outlines giving an idea of a deformed

human figure, uniting all that is horrible in the tiger and rattle-snake : instead of arms it is supplied with two large serpents, and its drapery is composed of wreathed snakes interwoven in the most disgusting manner, and the sides terminating in the wings of a vulture. Its feet are those of the tiger, with claws extended in the act of seizing its prey, and between them lies the head of another rattle-snake, which seems descending from the body of the idol. Its decorations accord with its horrid form, having a large necklace composed of human hearts, hands, and skulls, and fastened together by the entrails,—the deformed breasts of the idol only remaining uncovered. It has evidently been painted in natural colours, which must have added greatly to the terrific effect it was intended to inspire in its votaries.

During the time it was exposed, the court of the University was crowded with people,

the greater part of whom expressed the most decided anger and contempt. Not so however all the Indians: I attentively marked their countenances; not a smile escaped them, or even a word—all was silence and attention. In reply to a joke of one of the students, an old Indian remarked, “It is true we have three very good Spanish gods, but we might still have been allowed to keep a few of those of our ancestors!” and I was informed that chaplets of flowers had been placed on the figure by natives who had stolen thither, unseen, in the evening for that purpose; a proof that, notwithstanding the extreme diligence of the Spanish clergy for three hundred years, there still remains some taint of heathen superstition among the descendants of the original inhabitants.—In a week the cast was finished, and the goddess again committed to her place of interment, and hidden from the profane gaze of the vulgar.

CHAPTER XXV.

First Visit to the Silver Mine at Themascaltepec.

HAVING received an invitation from Mr. Smith Wilcox, the American Consul-General, to visit a silver mine distant about thirty leagues from Mexico, on which he was then, at considerable expense, erecting a steam-engine, for the purpose of clearing it from the water which had prevented it from being worked for several years ;—on the 24th of April I accompanied that gentleman, his nephew, and the proprietor of the mine. We left the city after breakfast, in a carriage drawn by seven mules, and travelled by the side of the great aqueduct which

bounds the road on one side, whilst the other is separated from the swampy meadows reclaimed from the lake by a deep ditch, the bank of which is planted with large trees somewhat resembling our poplars. At a league's distance we passed the fine palace or castle of Chapultepec, built by the Viceroy Galvez at an immense expense, and lately occupied by the Ex-Emperor: it stands on a remarkable hill, or rather rock, and commands a most beautiful view of the city and surrounding country. About two miles farther lies the village of Tacubaya, finely situated on the first rising ground, principally composed of the beautiful houses, villas, and superb gardens, of the nobility and rich citizens of the capital. The noblest view of the city is obtained a little above this place, not far from the Bishop's palace, but even from hence no idea of its extent can be formed by a stranger, as the site is so flat that little more

than its profile can be seen. It is only from the top of its cathedral, or from its grand streets, crossing each other at right angles, that an estimate of the size and splendour of Mexico can be made. We now ascended by a tolerable road for nearly ten miles to an hacienda, where we stopped to dine, the road to it affording nothing very interesting, and in some places appearing barren and burnt up. At this spot rises the fine stream of water which forms the principal supply for the capital, to which it is carried, at great cost, by means of an aqueduct. We continued to ascend till within a short distance of Lerma, when (having crossed the mountains that surround the valley of Mexico), we descended into the plain or valley in which that place and the city of Toluca stand. On reaching the town we found the entrance closed for the night, but after some detention procured admission from the go-

vernor, and reached the posada about eight in the evening.

Lerma is a regularly built town, but consists principally of small houses: it appears never to have been completed.

We left it soon after daylight, passing the end of a lake which seems as though it had formerly been much larger than it is at present, and crossed the fine plain, covered by rich meadows and considerable farms, in high cultivation. In two hours we reached Toluca, a distance of twelve miles, to breakfast, the road being as good as in any part of Britain, and without a curve the whole way.

Toluca, like most of the Mexican cities, is handsome, and regularly built. Its exterior presents an appearance of prosperity not observable in other places: the houses had a new and fresh appearance, and, what I had not before seen, several new buildings were then constructing. It has considerable manufac-

tories of soap and candles ; the best hams and sausages in New Spain are said to be cured here ; we observed several manufactories of them, and admired again their fine breed of hogs.

We left Toluca in our coach, and proceeded about two leagues farther, to a respectable and substantial hacienda, to the owner of which I was subsequently indebted for much polite attention. Here the road for wheel carriages ceases, and having procured horses and mules for the whole party, which had been augmented by the addition of several persons going to the mine, (among them a Yorkshire blacksmith), we ascended for about a league, and then entered the extensive woods, which crowned the Cordillera, on the west side of the Table-land of Mexico. This was by much the most beautiful scene I had yet witnessed in America ;—abounding with trees of the noblest forms and loftiest height, most

of them entirely new to me, but among them oaks and pines, whose size and luxuriance eclipsed any to be found either in the Alps or in Norway ! We still continued to rise, and in one elevated open place caught the last view of the mountains that surround the vale of Mexico: on our left lay the volcano of Toluca, covered with perpetual snow; and shortly after, reaching a defile in the mountain, began to descend towards the Pacific ocean.

The scenery was now inexpressibly grand. The ground, broken into abrupt hills, afforded many openings, through which the tops of the immense forests below were seen to the greatest advantage. In many places, for a considerable distance, our path was shaded by trees of an amazing height, so close as almost to exclude the light,—on emerging suddenly from which, the most enchanting prospects were spread beneath our feet; the summits of gigantic volcanos, receding like steps be-

neath us, seemed to lead the eye to the waters of the Pacific, to which the mountain-torrents we had passed were hastening. The descent now became very steep, so that in many places we were obliged to alight from our mules, and proceed, with cautious steps, over broken masses of basalt and other volcanic substances, where not a trace of the labour of man was visible, or any circumstances that could remind us of being in an inhabited country; except occasionally meeting small groups of Indians, carrying the productions of their little farms to the market of Toluca, or even as far as to that of Mexico. From these simple people the unprotected traveller has nothing to fear; they are the most courteous, gentle, and unoffending creatures in existence, never passing a stranger without offering a courteous salutation. Their burthens consist generally of fruit, fowls, turkeys, mats, shingles of wood for roofs of

houses, and sometimes of charcoal. The greater number generally had their wives and daughters with them; clean, modest-looking women, carrying heavy burthens exclusive of the children usually fastened to their backs. After a descent of several hours through this ever-varying and sublime scenery, to the effect of which a thunder-storm added much majesty, we arrived at a small plain, surrounded on all sides by pine-capped mountains. In the centre of this, in the midst of highly cultivated ground, rose the neat little Indian church and village of St. Miguel de los Ranchos, placed in one of the most delightful situations and lovely climates in the world. On the mountain we might almost have complained of cold, but the descent had brought us into a temperature resembling the finest parts of Europe, and our approach to the village just before sun-set brought our native country strongly to our recollection. The

path lay through corn fields, orchards, and gardens. Apples, pears, and peaches, almost obstructed our way; and fields of potatoes and beans in blossom might, but for the swarthy and thinly clothed inhabitants who gazed with surprise at our advance, and the luxuriance of the nopal or the great American aloe, in full bloom, have made us fancy ourselves in England. We rode up to the church, and on dismounting presently found ourselves surrounded by numbers of men and boys, all eager to render us any assistance in their power. A small room adjoining this edifice, called the *comunidad*, provided by government for the reception of strangers, was pointed out to us as our residence for the night; where having spread our mattresses on the floor, and given the Indians directions for the suppers of ourselves and horses, we walked out to examine the church. It was the eve of the feast of St. Mark, or, as the

Indians who accompanied us called him, *Nos-tras Boueno Amigo* (our good friend).

The church was gaudily ornamented with pictures and statues, and had that day been dressed with fruits, flowers, palm blossoms, &c., disposed in arches, chaplets, and a variety of other pretty devices, in honour of their patron saint.

Opposite the door, under a venerable cedar of great size, was a small temple and altar, decorated in a similar manner, with the addition of several human skulls, quite clean, and as white as ivory. Round the great tree some men were employed in splitting pieces of candle-wood, a species of pine which contains a considerable quantity of resin, and which, being lighted, burns with a clear flame like a candle.

I rambled through the village and the surrounding plantations of the maguey or aloe: many of the plants were then pro-

ducing the pulque. Night was approaching, and I hastened my pace, to reach our lodging, when the bell suddenly tolled in a quick manner, and in an instant the churchyard was brilliantly illuminated by the flame of eight piles of the candle-wood, prepared for the purpose, the effect of which was heightened by its being quite unexpected. On my entering the churchyard, four men discharged a flight of rockets, which was instantly answered by a similar salute from every house in the place: this was the commencement of the fête for the following day. In a quarter of an hour the bonfires were extinguished, the church doors closed, and we retired to our place of rest to take the homely supper provided for us by our new friends, which had been prepared in a house in the village. Our meal was scarcely finished when a messenger requested our speedy attendance in the church: on entering we found it illu-

minated, and crowded by numbers of persons of both sexes. Dancing, with singular Indian ceremonies, had commenced in front of the altar, which, to my astonishment, I immediately recognised to be of the same nature as those in use before the introduction of Christianity. The actors consisted of five men and three women, grotesquely but richly dressed, in the fashion of the time of Montezuma. One young man, intending to personate that monarch, wore a high crown, from which rose a plume of red feathers. The first part of the drama consisted of the representation of a warrior taking leave of his family preparatory to going to battle;—a man and woman danced in front of the altar, and clearly expressed the parting scene, then kneeling down solemnly prayed for the success of his undertaking. The next act commenced with two warriors, superbly dressed; the one, a Mexican, was distinguished by the superior

height of his head-dress, and by a piece of crimson silk suspended from his shoulders: after dancing some time, a mock fight began, which, being followed by various evolutions, terminated of course in the Mexican taking his enemy prisoner, and dragging him by the hair into the presence of his sovereign; the dance was then resumed, the vanquished frequently imploring mercy, both from his conqueror and the monarch. The various parts were admirably performed:—no European pantomime could have been better, and I almost expected to see the captive really sacrificed to the gods. The audience seemed pleased with our attendance, except one old man, who appeared to think we had seen too much; he was a little elevated with pulque, but some of the younger ones soon carried him out. In dancing, the women accompanied their motions and the music with a slight instrument in the right hand; it was a rattle,

made of a small gourd ornamented with silver bells, having a pleasing effect. I tried to buy one of these, but the owner refused to part with it. One old man seemed to act in a three-fold capacity:—he was fiddler, or leader of the band; master of the ceremonies; and, if I mistake not, represented also the high priest. He wore a white dress, over which were placed wreaths of small green leaves—and he it was who apparently regulated the whole performance of the drama. On one occasion, when the royal Montezuma received the homage of his prisoner, the monarch remained standing, which being contrary to the etiquette of his court, he was gently reminded of the error by a smart stroke on the cheek with the fiddlestick of the high priest; on which his majesty immediately squatted, and received with propriety the address of his general and the supplication of his prisoner.

Soon after this we left the church and retired to rest, but were shortly afterwards serenaded at our residence; the party wished for admission, but Mr. Wilcox being indisposed, we refused to open the door. About midnight we heard them again at their revels, when a flight of rockets concluded their devotions till morning.

We were still eighteen miles from the mine, at which it was desirable we should arrive early; we therefore left the village before daybreak, some of the people having remained all night with our horses. They wished much to detain us, to see the conclusion of their fête, and I felt regret at not staying. Our road lay through the numerous little farms belonging to the town, which extends a considerable distance. All was silent as death, except the stream that ran through this peaceful vale; and the moon shone without a cloud as we passed through

the plantations and gardens of these happy children of nature, who here cultivate their native soil without the interruption of a single white face, and seem scarcely to feel or even to know their humiliating situation. Half an hour's easy ride brought us again to the woods, and to a repetition of the same magnificent scenery we had witnessed the day before. In some spots, the height of the trees and the closeness of the foliage over our heads were such as to make it absolutely dark, although the moon still shone with the greatest splendour. Our path was in some places difficult, and we had again to ascend towards the mountain-regions. About sunrise we reached a more open and cultivated country, and travelled near a rapid river, whose banks were covered with fields of wheat and maize—the prospect from whence is as rich as in any part of Devonshire. Our narrow path, in many places, was so

overgrown with vegetation as to be almost impassable. Among the fruits that presented themselves was our common blackberry, in greater perfection than in Europe; and once or twice we gathered very good strawberries. We now reached a sterile sandy district, and passed a few barren hills, which had, in some tracts, been worn by torrents into a variety of the most extraordinary and fantastic forms: leaving these, we descended into a fine country, and entered the mining district of Themascaltepec, which a few years since produced a considerable portion of the precious metal exported to Europe. A mile of steep and difficult descent brought us to the town from which the district takes its name. It is most romantically situated in a deep valley, near the junction of three rapid mountain-streams, and is fixed on the only spot sufficiently level for the purpose.

Themascaltepec contains about one thou-

sand inhabitants. It is now in a state of decay ; most of the haciendas for preparing the silver ore being in ruins, and the expensive water-courses, which formerly turned the ponderous machinery for pounding the ore, now neglected, and concealed by the thick vegetation with which they are overgrown.

The appearance of so many strangers in this retired little town excited some surprise among its inhabitants. I was the first Englishman that had ever visited it. We were hospitably received at the house of Don Jose Benitas, where Mr. Wilcox was met by Mr. Goulde, his American engineer, and many of the people whom he had brought from the United States for the purpose of erecting the steam-engine then putting up at his own mine, distant about a mile from the town.

After partaking of a good Spanish breakfast, for which our long ride gave us an

excellent appetite, we remounted our horses and rode thither. The road or path had been improved at much expense by Mr. Wilcox, but still it was such as few persons accustomed to our English turnpike roads would choose to venture upon on horseback: but surely nothing can excel it in point of romantic scenery, or in the luxuriance and variety of the vegetation, which in some places renders it difficult of passage. The mine is situated in a valley, through which a small stream winds, till it falls into the river at the bottom of the town.

We found the works in considerable forwardness, and part of the machinery for the steam-engine had already arrived; this had been brought from Vera Cruz to Toluca on waggons, and from thence through the woods by means of rude wooden carriages built on the spot, drawn by Indians and oxen.

A shed of great magnitude, in the form of

a cross, and as large as a cathedral, had been very ably constructed, and roofed with shingles, under the direction of Don Jose Benitas, with the aid of Indians only, and without the use of iron, being lashed firmly together with thongs of raw hides. The purpose of this shed was to cover the engine, and the various workshops, as well as the mouth of the mine, and to protect the workmen from the sun and rain. The erection of roofs of this magnitude in England would have incurred an enormous expense, and would have called for the talents of our ablest architects.

Indian workmen, like all uninformed people, are strongly prejudiced in favour of their own customs; and Europeans who have taken mines in Mexico will have much to contend with before they can bring them to work under their directions. They are indeed particularly averse to innovation. A common wheelbarrow is much too complex a machine

to be used by them in removing rubbish from a mine; and Mr. Wilcox was obliged to submit to two men dragging about half as much earth on a raw hide as one could have removed with ease on a barrow. A saw for cutting planks they had never seen till we arrived, and its operation really astonished them. They thought it impossible that more than one plank could be made from any one tree: yet, by kind usage, and by respecting their prejudices, I have no doubt they will gradually be brought to confess the superiority of our Mechanics and to obey their directions; but it must be effected by degrees, and with caution: compulsory measures should never be resorted to, and the workmen sent out must also be particularly cautioned under no circumstances to interfere with their religious prejudices.

We returned to dinner, and in the evening rambled along the banks of one of the nu-

merous streams that unite near this place, and form a considerable river, which afterwards empties itself into the Pacific ocean.

The situation of Themascaltepec is the most delightful that can be imagined: its temperature is rather warmer than that of the capital, but I never found it unpleasant, and there is scarcely a vegetable production that might not be cultivated there in perfection.

I know of no place more desirable for a human residence: it wants but the re-establishment of the mines or manufactories, to make it again what it has been,—the source and mart of abundance and riches. The various remains of haciendas, and of smelting and amalgamation houses, on the banks of its rapid streams, attest its former consequence; and if ever commercial enterprise, and the employment of British capital should be established in Mexico, no place that I have seen can be better

adapted for the purpose, as, independent of its other advantages, any quantity of machinery could be worked by its waters, and the neighbouring woods would furnish an inexhaustible supply of fuel.

Sunday being market-day, the town was crowded with Indians, who brought with them great quantities of fruit, and other vegetable productions of the *Tierra Caliente*; among which were two or three kinds of raw cotton, and a quantity of sugar, in cakes, resembling bees' wax.

At the house of Don Jose Benitas there was a meeting of Indians, to settle a contract for timber for the mine. The contractors, with three *alcaldes*, or chief magistrates of the villages, known by their silver-headed sticks, came to meet Mr. Wilcox, to arrange this important affair, but it was not done without much serious debating, and many long speeches, which the *alcaldes* delivered in a most deliberate and solemn manner.

In the evening we attended an itinerant kind of theatrical exhibition, consisting of interludes, rope-dancing, tumbling, &c. Some of the feats were exactly the same as those described to have been performed before Cortez, on his first arrival; and such as I have not seen in Europe. A fellow placed himself on the ground, raised his bare feet, and received on them a beam of wood, eight feet long, and eight inches thick; this he threw several times into the air, catching it again on the soles of his feet; he then caused it to spin round like the fly of a jack,—when, changing his manner of striking it, he made it turn lengthways, with great velocity throwing it from one foot to the other, so that the bells fastened to the ends of it kept time to the music. After amusing us awhile in this way, he rested for a few minutes, when two boys were suspended at the ends of the beam, which he again balanced and threw with them into the air, receiving them al-

together on his feet. They were then put into rotatory motion, and turned with such violence, that one of the lads fainted: this put an end to the exhibition, which was attended by some of the first people in the place, who provided their own seats, though some families had only a mat spread for them on the ground.

Ices, dulces, &c., were served during the time of exhibition, and the place was illuminated by two fires of candle-wood, raised about seven feet from the ground.

The company seemed highly delighted, and the behaviour of the lower classes was very orderly, although there was no lack of mirth, as the Indian who enacted the clown performed his part in a manner that would not have disgraced Grimaldi himself. His comical remarks excited the most boisterous merriment, in which I was obliged to join, though at my own expense, for he made several

pointed allusions to a stranger who had arrived at Themascaltepec from the other side of the world, to feast on humming birds, beetles, butterflies, and lizards.

The following day our party rode to an amalgamation house, the only one of consequence now in operation, about two miles up the river, on the bank of which it is situated. The superintendent showed us the whole process of extracting the silver from the ore, an operation which gives employment to a great number of people, principally Indians. The ore, which was brought by mules from a mine at some miles' distance, is of a yellowish clay colour, and not very rich: it is of that kind distinguished here by the name of *colorado*. It is first pounded by large heavy stampers, worked by water, and sifted through hides pierced with small holes, to answer the purpose of sieves; the powdered ore is next carried into a large flagged apartment, and

piled in heaps of a ton or more in each, and then mixed with salt, sulphate of iron, lime, vegetable ashes, &c. A quantity of mercury in proportion to the calculated quantity of silver, is then added, and suffered to remain for some time, the whole being turned or worked together by Indians treading it with their feet. When they suppose the mercury has entirely united with the ore, it is put into vats, over which a stream of water passes: the amalgamated ore is then stirred up, the earthy part carried off by the stream, and the mercury, incorporated with the silver, remains at the bottom. The silver is afterwards separated from the quicksilver by means of fire, with a considerable loss. It has been proved by experiments lately made in Cornwall on ore sent from Mexico for the purpose, that the same, or nearly the same process that is used in smelting tin, may with considerable advantage, be applied to the more valuable metal of silver.

Having obtained specimens of the ore, in its different stages of preparation, and the various processes in use being explained to us, we rode through a very rich valley to Upper Themascaltepec, a small town of not very inviting appearance, about four miles from the lower town, and returned by another route to Mr. Wilcox's mine. The ride was altogether through a fertile country, and the farms and cottages presented an appearance of comfort not usually seen. We killed several new birds, among which was a species of thrush, of a deep lead colour, whose note could not be surpassed by any of that musical family which inhabit Europe.

I shot several humming birds in the garden of the house in which we lived—a pomegranate tree in full blossom was much frequented by them, and afforded me many opportunities of observing their manners and habits.

The rocks round the town abound with

an elegant species of lizard, of a dark blue and orange colour. I engaged a boy to catch me half a dozen, for which I gave him a quarter of a dollar: he unfortunately spread the report of this commission through the town, and the next day all the idle fellows of the place beset my lodgings with strings of lizards—the whole neighbourhood seeming to have been ransacked for them.

The appearance of the fire-flies in the evening is very beautiful, and, to an European, surprising. Soon after sun-set the air is filled with small luminous floating sparks, shooting in every direction, and vanishing in an instant. This was the first place where I had seen them in such great abundance, but my attempts to take them were unsuccessful.

The evenings spent in these regions in the open air are more delightful than those of the finest parts of Italy; and the appearance of the sides of the mountains round the town at

this time was highly picturesque at night, as it was near the termination of the dry season, when it is the custom to burn the low brush-wood and dry vegetables, in order to improve and clear the ground for a new crop. They were generally fired at night, when the sides of the hills became a blaze, which spread with rapidity, and resembled the burning lava of a volcano, surrounding the town for many miles with moving sheets of flame.

Mr. Wilcox having finished the business on which he came, we left this pleasant place about noon, arrived at St. Miguel early in the evening, and experienced the same attention from the Indian inhabitants as before. I had furnished myself with a few segars for them, and they seem always gratified with any little attention from Europeans. Some horses, the property of travellers, had lately been carried off from the village, and the Indians placed a strong guard over ours for

their security. Many of these harmless people were at our door before daylight, to offer their protection and assistance.

We left them early, intending to reach Lerma that night, but in ascending a very steep part of the road my saddle slipped from under me, by which means I received a severe fall, and it was with difficulty I could reach Toluca; where having been bled, and rested till the next day, we proceeded to Lerma, and the following evening entered Mexico, much pleased with the magnificent country through which we had passed, and with the simple manners of the people who inhabit it.

On my arrival I immediately prepared for making casts of the Aztec idols and sculptures which had been discovered about twenty-four years since, and fortunately had been suffered to remain entire. The colossal figure of Teoyamiqui, the Goddess of War, was buried under the gallery of the University,

but on an application from M. Del Rio, professor of mineralogy, the earth was removed from around it, to enable me to take an impression in plaster, a process occupying several days, during which, as I have elsewhere related more in detail, the court-yard was generally crowded with persons drawn by curiosity to see this monstrous idol of their ancient countrymen.

I next procured an order from the minister of state, Don L. Alaman, for the pavement of the great square to be removed, so as to enable me to make casts of the sculptured sides of the great Sacrificial stone or altar. The operation of moulding this huge block of stone was attended with much trouble, as, at the depth of two feet, the water flowed into the excavation, and greatly impeded our work; to which interruption the continual influx of the curious contributed not a little.

A scaffold was then erected by order of the bishop against the side of the cathedral, to allow me to cast the great Calendar stone, vulgarly called Montezuma's watch. It is thirty-six feet in circumference, but being flat, I was enabled to take it in several pieces, as without this it would have been difficult to have removed the copy to the sea-coast for embarkation. This cast was attended with much personal labour; for, as I could enlist none who understood the process, to assist us, the whole trouble devolved on my son and myself; but the publicity which these operations gave to my pursuits were so far advantageous, that through them I had several statues, manuscripts, and other antiquities offered to me for sale, which otherwise I could never have discovered.

Having prepared my casts for transportation, and finding a little leisure from my other avocations, I determined to visit all those

places in the neighbourhood most interesting to the antiquary and historian, as containing remains of the palaces, pyramids, or temples of the aboriginal inhabitants.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Excursion from Mexico to Tezcuco, Otumba, and the
Pyramids of St. Juan de Teotihuacan, and round the
Lake of Tezcuco.

ON Whit-Sunday, 1823, I left Mexico, in company with Mr. Gillow and my son, attended by an Indian guide, furnished to us by the politeness of Donna Roderigez, mother of the Countess of Regla, to whom also we were indebted for letters of introduction to some of the principal inhabitants of Tezcuco.

We were early on horseback, and in passing the great square of the city, witnessed a sight not often seen by Europeans, though no rarity here:—nearly a thousand horses and mules, laden with silver, were just preparing

to start for Vera Cruz, where the silver was to be shipped on board an English frigate. Such a scene, when the mining operations are in activity, is a very common occurrence ; and even now, when the mines were nearly all filled with water, and ruined, it seemed scarcely to attract the notice of the people.

We proceeded several miles on the original causeway leading to Vera Cruz, which passes over what was formerly the lake of Tezcucó, though it is now dried up. When we arrived at Mexico, only seven weeks before, the ditches were filled with water, and covered by myriads of shoveller ducks and other aquatic birds, the Indians being employed in fishing ; but, owing to the unusually dry season, the whole had become an arid desert, and sent forth such effluvia, as, in a less elevated country, must have been productive of the worst consequences. The usual road lay round the borders of the lake, but our guide

took us across its dry bed, which shortened the journey above a league. This passage brought forcibly to my recollection the accounts of journeying over Arabian deserts, excepting that on one side our prospect terminated in vegetation, and that on all sides we were surrounded by mountains. It was a level sand, without a blade of grass, or any other vegetable matter, so burnt up and yielding, that our horses could only, and with difficulty, travel at a walking pace. There was not a living object near us, excepting that now and then a group of Indians chanced to cross our path, which still kept up the resemblance to Arabia, as they were not unlike the petty caravans. We arrived at a village, and observed the first commencement of verdure, and a few miles farther, through sandy, parched fields, brought us again into a good road; so that, after a pleasant ride over a country not very fertile, we reached the

gates of Tezcuco. Some time before approaching the immediate vicinity of the city, you are apprised that you are near a place of great antiquity. You pass the large aqueduct for the supply of the town, which is still in use, and you also pass the ruins of several stone buildings of great strength. A bridge, over which the road passes (Puente des Brigantinas), points out the place where Cortez built and launched his brigantines on the lakes, when he returned to conquer the capital; but such is the change in the face of the country, that it is now a league and a half from the water: a little farther on we observed the foundations of some ancient buildings of great magnitude.

Near the gates, we perceived the modern ditches dug for the defence of the city during the revolution: these had brought to light several ancient structures, all of great strength, and many of considerable size. On entering

the gates, to the right are seen those artificial tumuli, the teocalli of unburnt brick so common in most Indian towns, supposed to be temples, tombs, or places of defence, or perhaps serving for all these purposes.

The town was crowded with country people; and our English dresses and small saddles excited their surprise and merriment. We were conducted to the house of Don Pedro Poso, the chief magistrate, an old Spaniard, and a most hospitable and worthy man, into whose family we were received and treated with the greatest politeness. His brother, with whom I had formed some acquaintance in Mexico, and who was well acquainted with the antiquities of the place, fortunately happened to be travelling through the town at the time, and very kindly undertook, whilst dinner was preparing, to conduct us to some of the many interesting objects with which Tezcucó abounds.

The foundations and ruins of temples, for-

tresses, palaces, and other extensive buildings, are alone sufficient to attest its former consequence and splendour ; but it is likewise well known to have been in earlier times the seat of Mexican literature and arts. It was the Athens of America, and the residence of historians, orators, poets, artists, and the great men of every department of the sciences who existed in those days. It was on the return of Cortez to the attack of Mexico, after a series of misfortunes succeeding the night of desolation, with his army recruited by the Spaniards from Cuba, and reinforced and assisted by the Tlascallans, that, advancing to this city, he was invited by the caique to enter and take up his quarters for the night ; but the wary general, suspecting treachery, deferred his entry till the morning, when he found the town deserted, and that preparations had actually been made to destroy his army had he accepted the invitation the evening before. Upon this, Cortez deposed the reigning caique,

and placed in his stead a young man who was in great favour with him, and who ever after continued firmly attached to his interest. He built a strong fortress or barrack for the safety and convenience of Cortez' troops; and the town remained the head-quarters of the Spaniards till the final reduction of Mexico.

Under the guidance of Don Pedro Poso we commenced our rambles, and first inspected the Spanish palace built soon after the Conquest. It is large, and has been handsome, but is now in as ruinous a state as the Indian palace which preceded it.

We were next shown an Indian idol, nearly perfect, lying neglected under a gateway, a rattle-snake of considerable size; it had originally been painted of various colours, some of which were rendered perfectly distinct by merely throwing water upon them. From this we walked to the Spanish quarters

or barrack, built by the young caique of Tezcuco for Cortez, still entire, surrounded by a wall twenty feet high, on the top of which the traces of the walks of the Spanish centinels are distinctly visible; and we were shown a recess in the wall built for the celebration of mass. After passing the fine aqueduct, and several tumuli, (pyramids of unburnt bricks), our guide conducted us to the site of the palace of the ancient caiques, or tributary kings of Tezcuco. It must have been a noble building, far surpassing any idea I had formed of the architectural abilities of the aboriginal Americans. It extended three hundred feet, forming one side of the great square, and was placed on sloping terraces, raised one above the other by small steps: some of these terraces are still entire, and covered with cement, very hard, and equal in beauty to that found in ancient Roman buildings. From what is known of the extensive

foundations of this palace, it must have occupied some acres of ground. It was composed of huge blocks of basaltic stone, of about four or five feet long, and two and a half or three feet thick, cut and polished with the utmost exactness. The great church which stands close by, is almost entirely built of the materials taken from the palace, many of the sculptured stones from which may be seen in the walls, though most of the ornaments are turned inwards. Indeed our guide informed us, that whoever built a house at Tezcucó made the ruins of the palace serve as his quarry. On visiting this city the antiquarian will find many things worthy of his notice. I suspect that most of the buildings are little altered from what they were before the arrival of the Spaniards, who must themselves have employed, at least for some time, the same workmen and materials as the original inhabitants. In many of the walls and

pavements I discovered fragments of sculptured stones, and in a small house I found the ancient arms of Mexico, the Spread Eagle and Nopal, with hieroglyphic characters. At a well about half a mile from the town are two circular carved stones, that may have been used on the identical spot, before the Conquest, for the same purpose as at present.

On our return our host pressed us to witness a cock-fight (it was Whit-Sunday): to oblige him, I saw for the first time in my life that sanguinary sport. The building, which was erected for the purpose, was crowded with persons of both sexes and of all ages, and I was mortified at seeing several well dressed females, whose looks too evidently betrayed the pleasure they received from this inhuman pastime. I could not but consider it as a strong proof of the great distance at which these people are placed behind the inhabitants of Europe in refinement and intellectual en-

joyment. I am no judge of such exhibitions myself, but the English friend who accompanied us, and who is from Lancashire, assured us that the animals were very fine, and one of the inhabitants, in speaking in praise of them, said they were of the true Derby breed !

Whilst at dinner we were informed that at a distance of only two leagues was a place called Baño de Montezuma, and that it had formerly been used as a bath by that monarch. A gentleman of the town, Don Trinidad Rosalia, offered to conduct us thither, and in a few minutes we were on horseback : after a smart canter through cultivated grounds, and over a fine plain, bounded by the mountains of the Cordilleras, we approached an hacienda and a church* ; here, in some subterraneous cavern, I expected to find the bath

* Every person who builds an hacienda is by law compelled to erect a church also.

of which we were in search, but learnt to my surprise and regret that we had yet to mount a conical mountain called Tescosingo. We employed our horses as far as they could be used, but the unevenness of the ground at last obliged us to dismount, and having fastened them to a nopal tree, we scrambled with great difficulty through bushes and over loose stones, which were in great quantities on all sides, and at last perceived that we were on the ruins of a very large building—the cemented stones remaining in some places covered with stucco, and forming walks and terraces, but much encumbered with earth fallen from above, and overgrown with a wood of nopal, which made it difficult to ascend. In some places the terraces were carried over chasms by solid pieces of masonry; in others cut through the living rock: but, as we endeavoured to proceed in a straight line, our labour was very great, being some-

times obliged to climb on our hands and knees. At length, however, by the assistance of underwood, and after passing several buildings and terraces, the stucco of which appeared fresh and of a fine peach colour, we arrived at about two-thirds of the height of the hill, almost exhausted with our exertions; and great indeed was our disappointment when we found that our guide had mistaken the situation, and did not exactly know where we were. Greatly chagrined, we began to retrace our steps; and luckily in a few minutes perceived the object of our search. It was cut in the solid rock, standing out like a martin's nest from the side of a house. It is not only an extraordinary bath, but still more extraordinarily placed. It is a beautiful basin about twelve feet long by eight wide, having a well nearly five feet by four deep in the centre, surrounded by a parapet or rim two feet six inches high, with a throne or chair,

such as is represented in ancient pictures to have been used by the kings. There are steps to descend into the basin or bath; the whole is cut out of the living porphyry rock with the most mathematical precision, and polished in the most beautiful manner. This bath commands one of the finest prospects in the Mexican valley, including the greater part of the lake of Tezcucó, and the city of Mexico, from which it is distant about thirty miles.

Night was fast approaching, and the sky portending a thunder-storm, we were obliged to depart. I had now occasion to regret the hours I had unprofitably spent at the cock-fight, having scarcely time to make a hurried sketch for a model, and for my son to take a slight drawing, when we were reluctantly forced to quit a spot of such peculiar interest, which had been the site of a most singular and ancient residence of the former monarchs

of the country. As we descended, our guide showed us in the rock a large reservoir for supplying the palace with water, the walls still remained, eight feet in height, and as we explored farther, we found that the whole mountain had been covered with palaces, temples, baths, hanging gardens, &c. ; yet, extraordinary as it must appear, this place has never yet been noticed by any writer.

I am of opinion that these were antiquities prior to the discovery of America, and erected by a people whose history was lost even before the building of the city of Mexico. In our way down we collected specimens of the stucco which covered the terrace, still as hard and beautiful as any found at Portici or Herculaneum. Don T. Rosalia informed us that we had seen but the commencement of the wonders of the place ;—that there were traces of buildings to the very top still discernible ;—that the

mountain was perforated by artificial excavations, and that a flight of steps led to one near the top, which he himself had entered, but which no one as yet had courage to explore, although it was believed that immense riches were buried in it.

We remounted our horses, and an hour brought us back to Tezcuco, greatly fatigued indeed, but more lamenting the little time we had been able to devote to the most interesting place we had yet visited; and which, it is not a little extraordinary, appears to have been unnoticed by the Spanish writers at the Conquest, in whom it probably excited as little interest as it does in the present inhabitants of the city of Mexico, not one of whom could I find who had ever seen or even heard of it. What a subject for contemplation does this collection of ruins present to the reflecting mind! The seat of a powerful monarch, whose subjects (if we may

judge from their works), were probably an enlightened people, existing and flourishing long before the Continent of America was known to Europe, and yet a people whose customs, costume, religion, and architecture, strongly resembled those of an enlightened nation of Africa, which may be said to have ceased to exist twenty centuries before this continent was discovered.—Who can solve this difficulty?

Early the next morning we visited the Indian village of Huexotla, about two miles from Tezcuco. It was once a place of considerable importance, as its extensive and strong walls, and other ruins remaining, still amply testify. On our approach we observed several of the small pyramidical teocallis or mounts, composed of alternate layers of clay and unburnt brick; one of them had evidently an entrance to the centre, which was discovered by part of it having fallen in.

I have since regretted that I did not cause it to be opened, as it might have thrown some light on the obscure history of these common but extraordinary Aztec erections. Some of them as a mere matter of speculation, might amply repay the trouble and expense, as Bernal Dias, and other writers, positively assert that many of them contained considerable treasure.

On entering the village we were met by some Indians, who, on being informed of the object of our visit, kindly undertook to show us the antiquities of the place. They first pointed out the foundation of a palace, in which two large reservoirs of water still remained, tolerably perfect; one of these, covered with rose-coloured cement, is entire: we were then conducted through the town, which is mostly in ruins, consisting of buildings nearly demolished, in which the Indian and Spanish architecture were so blended, as to

be with difficulty traced apart. At the door of a cottage we noticed a large idol of stone, similar to that we had seen at Tezcucó, but of better workmanship; and in the centre of the town a singular kind of column with a pointed top, of which we made a drawing. By this time our party had considerably increased, and I believe consisted of all the male population of the place; never having been visited by strangers before, our appearance excited much amusement among them, but nothing could exceed their civility and kindness. They were delighted with the sketches we had made, and eagerly pointed out every object they thought worthy of our observation. The ancient wall, almost thirty feet high, and very thick, extends to a considerable distance, and is of a very singular construction, being divided into five unequal parts. The broadest division is built of large oval stones, with the ends standing out

so as to give it the appearance of having been formed of human skulls, and is divided from the rest by a projecting cornice. The whole is different from any thing I have ever seen. At the extremity of the town is the bed of a river, now dry, and forming a deep ravine, over which is a remarkable bridge, with a pointed arch, nearly forty feet high, said to have been built by the Indians before the Conquest. It is supported on one side by a mass of masonry in a pyramidical shape, and forms a very picturesque object when seen from below. On our return, our Indian friends pointed out to us a large area in front of the church, entirely stuccoed in the ancient manner, in which grew the finest olive trees I ever saw. Those of Tuscany are not half the size;—they must many of them be nearly thirty feet in circumference. At the end of the town, beyond the walls, on the road leading to Tezcucó, is a kind of broad

covered way between two huge walls which terminate near a river. This has probably been one of the entrances into the town. There are many things well worth examining in this place, and we left it, regretting that our time did not allow us to see more of it. We returned to Tezcucó across some fine fields of corn, and having put up our horses again, commenced our rambles over this very interesting city and its suburbs, every part of which exhibits remains of its ancient grandeur;—the raised mounds of brick are seen on all sides, mixed with aqueducts, ruins of buildings of enormous strength, and many large square structures nearly entire, (which I believe to be of Mexican architecture:) fragments of sculptured stones constantly occur near the church, the market-place, and palace, a visit to which cannot fail to awaken the most interesting recollections in the mind of a person at all versed in the history of this portion of

America. It was in this palace that Cortez, with his whole army, was lodged and entertained as described in the simple narrative of Bernal Dias, whose accounts I had many opportunities of corroborating. It was in the market-place here, too, that the zeal of the first bishop collected the documents of Mexican history, knowledge, and literature—all the Aztec paintings, manuscripts, and hieroglyphical writings;—and, forming them into an immense pyramid, committed the whole to the flames amid the unavailing prayers of the people for their preservation.

The history of Tezcucó is so little known to the English reader, that I make no apology for introducing the following short abstract from the works of Gama, whose labours have added much to our slender stock of knowledge of the history and customs of the ancient inhabitants of New Spain.

“THE kingdom of Acolhuacan, whose

capital was Tezcuco, though small, was, 350 years before the arrival of the Spaniards, one of the most populous and most ancient of Anahuac or Mexico. Its greatest length from north to south was seventy, and its breadth only twenty, leagues; besides Tezcuco and Otumba, it contained many other large cities, where to this day are to be seen specimens of rare and astonishing antiquities, particularly at the two places mentioned.

“ Its boundaries were, on the east the republic of Tlascalla, on the south the province of Chalco, on the north the land of Huastecas, and on the west the lake of Tezcuco: but this small kingdom was afterwards still more reduced by the encroachments made by the Mexicans, with whose kingdom it was at last incorporated, preserving, however, its laws and form of government, its king having the privilege of being one of the electors of the Mexican emperors.

“ Tezcucó, its capital, now reduced to insignificance, seems to have occupied a large space of ground, on which are yet to be seen fragments of considerable stone walls, &c.

“ It is situated on the eastern side of the large lake of the same name in the valley of Mexico, and five leagues distant from that city.

“ Among the thirteen kings, whose names history has recorded to have reigned over this kingdom from 1170 to 1520, one was named Nezahualcoyótl, who ascended the throne in 1426, and who has highly distinguished himself by his courage, wisdom, and virtues, and may justly be called the Solon of Anahuac: under him the arts flourished so highly, that Tezcucó has been compared to Athens, as it abounded in poets, orators, historians, and excellent workmen, and at the same time was the place where the purest Mexican language was spoken. Great disturbances arose in

Acolhuacan under the reign of Nezahualcoyolt, by the rebellion of a man named Maxatlón, who over-ruled that kingdom for the space of thirteen years, after which time he was overthrown and killed by the Mexicans under the command of the Emperor Montezuma the First, who also was a man of great talents. Nezahualcoyolt made eighty laws, which have been recorded, and exist in manuscript; he ordered that lawsuits and trials for crimes should only last eighty days, or four of their months; after which time, he himself used to settle all differences, and tried criminals, who were instantly punished according to their crimes: robbery, murder, adultery, drunkenness, and treason, were very severely punished; and, if we are to believe historians, he ordered to be put to death four of his sons, who were convicted of the horrible crime of incest: at the same time his clemency was great: he made it death to steal

any thing of the productions of the open fields, which was executed even for the small quantity of seven ears of Indian corn ; but, in order to avoid as much as possible the infliction of it, he commanded that fields should be sown at the sides of the highways, to procure food for the distressed. He was very charitable to the destitute, to old people, and to widows. To prevent bribery, he ordered that the judges should be maintained and clothed at the expense of government, according to their rank ; and for these motives, the expenses of his household and ministry were astonishing, as it is reported by Don Antonio Pimental, who was one of the three grandsons of that king, who received baptism, and who relates, that it was seen in the pictures of that time, that these expenses amounted annually to four millions ninety thousand three hundred fanegas, of one hundred pounds each, of Indian corn ; to two millions seven

hundred and forty-four thousand of cocoa; to three thousand two hundred of chile, or red pepper, and tomata; to two hundred and forty of chiltecpin, or small red pepper; to one thousand three hundred cakes of salt, and eight thousand turkeys; besides a large quantity of vegetables, deer, rabbits, and birds of different descriptions. Cocoa was brought from the warm climates, as it was not produced in the kingdom. Fourteen cities were obliged to furnish these provisions during six months, while fifteen others furnished them the rest of the year: young men were obliged to carry all the wood for the use of the palace.

“ The progress which this king made in the arts and sciences was indeed extraordinary, considering that he had neither books nor masters who could instruct him. He was an eminent poet himself, and many of his productions were highly esteemed. He com-

posed sixty hymns, in praise of the Creator of heaven, which were very much thought of by the Spaniards in the sixteenth century, and his two odes or songs which were translated into Spanish by his descendant Don Fernando Alva Ixtlilxochilt, have been preserved to our days. He also had some knowledge of astronomy by examining frequently the luminous bodies of the heavens, and equally applied himself to the knowledge of plants and animals, and all those that he could not possess on account of the difference of climate, he had them depicted, as it has been ascertained by the celebrated Doctor Hernandez, who saw them and copied some of them. This king also investigated the cause of many effects which existed in nature, which made him detest idolatry, exhorting privately his children to have it in abhorrence, though publicly they might pretend to adhere to it. He abolished for awhile human

sacrifices; but, out of respect for the ancient religious system, he was obliged to have them re-established, but ordered, on pain of death, that they should only be executed on prisoners of war. He erected, in honour of the Creator of heaven, a high tower of nine stories, in the uppermost of which was an apartment painted in blue, with gilt moulds, in which were men purposely intrusted with the care of striking at certain hours on sheets of fine metal, to create a sound, and the king, on his hearing it, used to fall upon his knees and address his prayers to the great Creator, in honour of whom he fasted on a certain day of the year.

“After a reign of thirty-four years, this celebrated king died in 1470, much regretted by his own people and by all the Mexicans. He was succeeded by Nezahualpilli, his youngest son, to whom he gave the preference on account of his talents and virtues.”

After a vain inquiry for the celebrated pyramids of the Sun and Moon, or of St. Juan de Teotihuacan, we set off for Otumba, in the expectation of finding them near that place,—a ride of two hours over a fine country, on which the number of handsome Spanish churches and haciendas exceeds that of any part of Mexico through which I had yet travelled. We arrived at the commencement of the mountains, but there was not a vestige of vegetable soil or vegetation, the whole being a soft iron-coloured stone, in which the continual passing of horses had worn deep tracks up to the animals' knees, and not more than fourteen inches wide, in which tracks it is very requisite to keep, in order to save the traveller from a worse road. We had thunder all the afternoon, and towards evening it rained in torrents, so that the dry beds of the rivers were in an hour filled, and poured their muddy waters in

floods to the Mexican lake, where depositing the earthy parts, it must in a short time be filled up. Upon descending the mountain we first caught a view of the two pyramids on a plain in front of us, at about five or six miles distance, and another hour brought us, drenched with rain, just before dark, into Otumba, the first place reached by Cortez after his defeat. At this place, after being refused admittance at several houses, we with some difficulty procured shelter in an empty carpenter's shop, where, in our wet clothes, having no fire, upon a bare floor of mud, without food, though not without appetite, we had a prospect of passing the night ; but observing a fire in a cottage near, I ventured to enter, and finding only an old woman and some children, I seated myself. The old lady was not at all pleased at my intrusion, but a few medias given to the children, and a dollar to herself, soon procured us bread and

eggs;—we dried our clothes, and having found dry boards to repose upon, passed the night in the carpenter's shop better than we at first expected.

Good bread and excellent chocolate were provided for our breakfast. After a stroll round the city, which is said to have once contained 50,000 inhabitants, we examined two curious ancient columns, richly sculptured; called upon the padre, but he could give us no information respecting the pyramids, although they were in full view from the town. We then left this wretched and deserted place, where even the water is so bad that necessity alone can induce any person to use it, and proceeded towards the stupendous remains, from which we were now distant about a league and a half. As we approached them, the square and perfect form of the largest became at every step more and more visibly distinct, and the terraces could

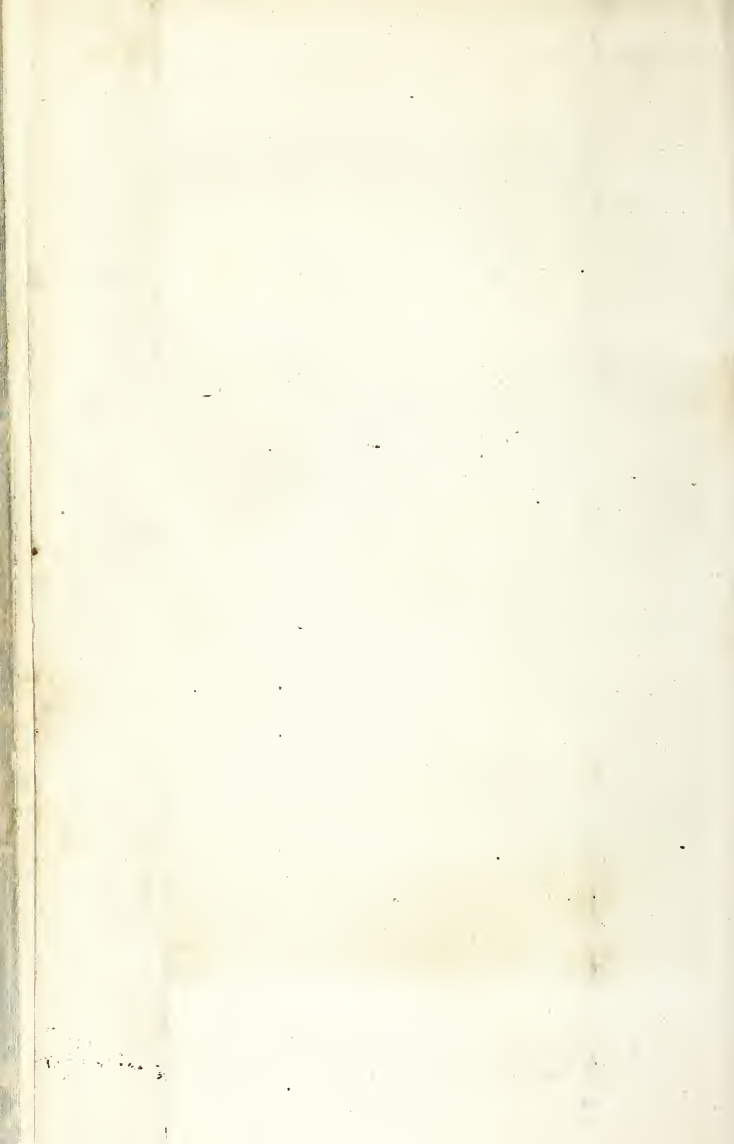


Drawn on the spot by the Painter J. J. Smith.

Published by J. Murray, London, 1847.

Clark sc.

PYRAMID of the SUN, or of SAN DE TEOTIHUACAN.



now be counted. We rode first to the lesser, which is the most dilapidated of the two, and ascended to the top, over masses of falling stone and ruins of masonry, with less difficulty than we expected. On the summit are the remains of an ancient building, forty-seven feet long and fourteen wide; the walls are principally of unhewn stone, three feet thick and eight high; the entrance is at the south end, having three windows on each side of it, and the north end or face appears to have been divided at about a third of its length. At the front of the building, with the great pyramid before us, and many smaller ones at our feet, we sat down to contemplate this scene of ancient wonders:—where the eye takes in the greater part of the vale of Mexico, its lake and city, and commands an extensive view of the plains beneath and the mountains that bound the west of the valley.

It was at this place that Cortez fought and defeated the innumerable army of Indians. After the horrible night of desolation, he expressly says, he arrived on the plains near Otumba ;—he ascended an eminence, and discovered the whole district covered with armies:—despair filled every breast, excepting that of the intrepid leader. The unnumbered host of Indians arrived, and closed round the small band of Spaniards, when the dauntless Cortez, with a few horsemen only, charged furiously that part of the enemy where the royal banner was carried ; the bearer of it was killed, the banner taken, and the whole of the immense multitude fled in the utmost consternation, offering no further interruption to the retreat of the Spaniards through Otumba to the territory of Tlascalla.

I think there can be little doubt that these immense structures, which vie with the pyramids of Egypt, were, at the period we are

speaking of, in the same state in which they now are ; and that it was on ascending one of them that Cortez beheld the approach of the great Indian army. There is no other eminence near, which could have answered the purpose, and if these had been objects of veneration, as temples, or places of military strength, then in use, they doubtless would have been defended, and he would not have been permitted to approach them. On descending we partook of some refreshment we had brought with us, and our Indian guide procured us some pulque, which was very acceptable. I went to a cottage close by, in which were several children almost in a state of nature. I tried to entice them by presents, but could not prevail on them to come near me : they seemed much terrified at our white faces and odd dresses. We mounted our horses, and rode to the several small barrows that are scattered in

various directions round the base of the second, and on the road to the largest pyramid; in some places these tumuli form regular streets running east and west.

Not far from the great pyramid, near a gate, lay an enormous stone, with a few sculptured ornaments, apparently of great antiquity. A boy who had followed us, observing that we viewed it with attention, took my son a little distance through a plantation, and showed him another of greater dimensions, covered with sculpture, with a hole in the top of it,—my son supposed it a stone of sacrifice.

We soon arrived at the foot of the largest pyramid, and began to ascend. It was less difficult than we expected, although, the whole way up, lime and cement are mixed with fallen stones. The terraces are perfectly visible, particularly the second, which is about thirty-eight feet wide, covered with a

coat of red cement eight or ten inches thick, composed of small pebble-stones and lime. In many places, as you ascend, the nopal trees have destroyed the regularity of the steps, but no where injured the general figure of the square, which is as perfect in this respect as the great pyramid of Egypt. We every where observed broken pieces of instruments like knives, arrow and spear-heads, &c., composed of obsidian, the same as those found on the small hills of Chollula; and, on reaching the summit, we found a flat surface of considerable size, but which has been much broken and disturbed. On it was probably a temple or other building,—and report says, a statue covered with gold. We rested some time on the summit, enjoying one of the finest prospects imaginable, in which the city of Mexico is included. Here I found fragments of small statues and earthenware, and, what surprised me more, oyster-shells, the first I had seen in

Mexico: they were of a new species, and I therefore brought home specimens of them. In descending I also found some ornamental pieces of earthenware, one of which is in relief, much resembling those of China, the other represents a grotesque human face. On the north-east side, about half way down, at some remote period, an opening has been attempted. This should have been made from the south to the north, and on a level with the ground, or a very few feet above it; as all the remains of similar buildings have been found to have had their entrances in that direction. Dr. Oteyza, who has given us the measure of these pyramids, makes the base of the largest six hundred and forty-five feet in length, and one hundred and seventy-one in perpendicular height. I should certainly consider that the latter measurement is considerably under the mark, and that its altitude must be half its breadth. As to the age of

the pyramids, and the people by whom they were erected, this must be a subject of mere conjecture; no one whom I could meet with in Mexico knew or cared any thing about the matter. None of the inhabitants had even been to see them, though, from the cathedral, both of them, as well as Tescosingo, containing the bath of Montezuma, are distinctly visible.

Nor could any person in their more immediate neighbourhood give me the least information respecting these wonderful structures:—on asking an old Indian woman whom we met near the pyramids if she could tell who made them, she replied, “Si Signior, St. Francisco.”

We proceeded to the village of St. Juan de Teotihuacan, and with some difficulty procured refreshment for ourselves and provender for our horses; and in the evening reached St. Christoval, again soaked with

rain, having passed, at the head of the lake of that name, the large dam or causeway, about a league in length, built by the government to prevent the flowing of the waters of the lake of St. Christoval into that of Tezcucó. During our ride near the lake we saw several aquatic birds and waders quite new to us, which would well repay the trouble of any ornithologist, and afford a day's good sport with the gun. We rested here a few hours on the bare floor, and departing before day, passed along the side of the lake through Guadalupe, where we were detained a short time by the centinels, and arrived at the gates of Mexico in sufficient time to have to wait half an hour for their being opened.

The result of this little excursion of three days has thoroughly convinced me of the veracity of the Spanish writers, whose account of the cities, their immense population,

their riches, and the progress of the arts among the Mexican people, are doubted by those who have never seen the country. I firmly believe all that the intelligent and indefatigable Abbe Clavigero has related of his countrymen. Had Monsieur de Pauw, or our better informed countryman Robertson, passed an hour in Tezcuco, Tescosingo, or Huexotla, they would never have supposed for a moment that the palace of Montezuma in Mexico was a clay built cottage, or that the account of the immense population of that city was a mere fiction.

It is not in the present capital of New Spain that we are to look for the remains of Mexican greatness, as every vestige of its former splendour was annihilated by the conqueror. He was compelled to demolish and level with the ground every house as he took it, and 50,000 Indian workmen followed close at the heels of his soldiers, to complete the work of

destruction, and fill up the canals in every street with the remains; but the foundations of the present city are visibly raised upon, and stand on the ruins of the old. It was the wish of the Spaniards not to leave a trace of former Mexican greatness, or even a recollection of the people they had destroyed; and they certainly completely succeeded in their object, for where are there the slightest traces of their ancient magnificent city but in the accounts of the early writers? It was well known that a map of it was made for Cortez, by order of Montezuma. The Baron de Humboldt says he sought in vain for it; it was believed to have perished above a hundred years since in a fire in the Casa de Estada (the house of Cortez). Chance, however, brought this interesting document to light. Having been fortunate enough to make purchase of it, I brought it to England in his Majesty's ship Phaeton, and a reduced

copy of it may now be seen in the first edition of this work : it is only a fragment, but the world will see from it, that Ancient Mexico must have been at least double the size of the present city, and that it equalled it in regularity, and excelled it in the number and size of its palaces and temples ; the account given of it by Cortez to his sovereign, as well as that of Bernal Dias, will therefore now be no longer doubted. From the number of our countrymen who have lately embarked for New Spain, many of whom are men of science and education, we may hope for much farther information, especially as the enlightened minister of state, Don Lucas Alaman, will, I am sure, have great pleasure in assisting them in their researches : to his kindness the public are principally indebted for the antiquities now at the Egyptian Hall, which are nearly the only ones, if we except a few Aztec MSS., that have ever reached Europe.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Second Visit to Themascaltepec.—Ceremony of taking Possession of a Silver Mine.

My first visit to this romantic country was merely a journey of pleasure; but while detained by the necessary business of Mr. Wilcox, I was shown the shaft of a valuable silver mine, which had been deserted for several years on account of the proprietor's not being able with the machinery of the country (worked by mules) to keep it clear of the water which overflowed it and expelled the workmen. On examining its situation, close to the precipitous stream of the river Bada, which is at this season considerable, it struck me that its waters, with the adoption of pro-

per machinery, were admirably calculated to drain the mine; and on consulting Mr. Goulde, the American engineer at the mine of Mr. Wilcox, he fully confirmed my conjecture, and offered to construct the required mill-work at a moderate expense, as the necessary iron-work for the machinery and pumps had been brought by him from New York. An inquiry into the former products of the mine, among several of the people who had worked in it, confirmed me in the determination if possible to possess it; and on my return to Mexico I consulted Don Lucas Alaman, minister of state, on the propriety of doing so, and was advised to apply to government for a letter of naturalization, to enable me to denounce it according to the law of the country; by his interest an Act of Congress was passed in a few days for the purpose, and now, accompanied by my friends, Mr. W. M. Bates and Mr. Snyders,

I went to take formal possession of the silver mine of Milan or Del Bada. We slept the first night at Lerma, where we were joined by Mr. Goulde and his servant, and on the second reached St. Miguel de las Ranchos, drenched with heavy rain, but my Indian friends supplied us with every comfort in their power. The next morning brought us to Themascaltepec, where the judge, or governor, received me with the greatest politeness, assured me he rejoiced in the prospect of foreigners, and particularly of the English, settling among them, as he was convinced, that by means of their capital and improved machinery, the mineral wealth of the country would be again brought into circulation, and the people be fully employed. We spent the evening with him, in the course of which he intimated that, understanding I had paid much attention to the flowers and fruits of the country, he would

show me some of the latter from an estate of his own in the neighbourhood, which was held in much estimation here; and which he accordingly did. We were next introduced into a small room, and found the floor piled with large bars of silver, the whole having been produced by his mine in a few weeks. The second day after my arrival I was formally installed in the seigniory of the mine and adjacent lands, in the presence of some of the principal inhabitants, with the padre of the town at their head, who attended for the purpose of witnessing the ceremony, which consisted of the proper officer taking me by the hand at the mouth of the mine, and declaring me, in the name of the government, to be its right and lawful owner; then congratulating me on the possession of such a valuable property, he requested me to take three stones and cast them in different directions, and afterwards to pluck up some weeds and

throw them away, to show that the land and whatever it produced was at my disposal*. We now returned, followed by the whole company and a crowd of Indians, to a house in the neighbourhood, where an entertainment was provided, consisting of wines, Spanish brandy, a variety of cakes, sweetmeats, and dulces, which, after a few appropriate toasts and a blessing from the padre, were quickly despatched, and the ceremony concluded with the greatest good humour.

The situations of mines, in general, are in sterile and barren districts, but those of Themascaltepec are an exception. It would be difficult for the traveller to point out a more lovely or romantic situation than the little town in which this mine is situated. The plentifully supplied market exhibits a

* This is precisely similar to the ceremony of infeftment, agreeably to the old feudal system still practised in Scotland.

profusion of every variety of vegetable and animal production that can be met with in Europe and America. In the same field may be seen the finest European wheat, plantations of sugar-cane, and fences made of the *Agava Americana*. The culinary vegetables are equally fine and cheap; the market well supplied with beef, mutton, pork, and poultry, all which are sold at a reasonable rate. The climate is still finer than at Mexico, for it is seldom warmer and never so cold: there is scarcely a change excepting during the wet season, when rain may be expected every afternoon. At the time of my visit vegetation was surprisingly luxuriant. The variety of flowers and ornamental plants yet unknown to European botanists exceeds all enumeration. The roads in the neighbourhood are almost impassable, from the festoons and arches formed by the variety of creepers which choke the way: wild vines, convolvuli,

and passifloras, form thickets that are almost impenetrable.

One undescribed tree, twenty feet high, with its bright green foliage, and flowers like clusters of roses*, is seen at almost every step as you traverse the banks of the three streams that surround the town, and whose waters flow through every part, being brought by means of aqueducts. Themascaltepec is the capital of one of the smallest mining districts in New Spain; yet its average annual produce, during the time the mines were at work, was 260,000 marks of silver. The town is situated in a small valley surrounded by mountains, containing silver, copper, and lead ores, whose surfaces are mostly covered with wood, among which the Indian cottages and plantations produce a very pleasing effect. The houses are mostly of one story, and covered with a large projecting

* Now growing in the Botanic Garden at Chelsea.

roof of wooden shingles, admirably adapted to the climate; they have but few glass windows and no chimnies, as the temperature is such as to render fires at all times unnecessary, excepting for culinary purposes, when charcoal only is used in simple brick stoves. I have often been surprised at the great facility and ease with which as good a dinner has been cooked, as by the elaborate and expensive apparatus used in our kitchens; the whole place of which is supplied by a few earthen vessels, of their own manufacture: grates, ranges, stoves, ovens, jacks, and all the et-ceteras of pots, kettles, stewpans, saucepans, steam and fryingpans, and a hundred others, are unknown here even by their names; the value of a few shillings in earthenware supplies the whole, and will furnish a greater variety of dishes than are in general to be met with at English tables. The town has a well supplied weekly market on Sundays,

when the assemblage of Indians is very numerous, and their conduct religious, decent, and becoming; they are here very unlike those of Mexico, I would as soon trust myself alone in their cottages for the night, and could repose in as much security, as in that of an English peasant. The respect and civility with which they treat strangers border almost on servility. On going to and returning from Themascaltepec, I have passed four nights in the Indian town of St. Miguel de las Ranchos, in which there is not a white inhabitant, and I never met with more kindness, honesty, and hospitality in any country. I have spent some delightful hours in this little hamlet, which is about eighteen miles from Themascaltepec, and situated in one of the most enchanting valleys in the world, and the inhabitants seem to be the most contented and happy of mankind. I wished much to have brought one of them to England, but

nothing could induce them to leave the lovely spot on which they are placed. The inhabitants of Themascaltepec are courteous and civil to strangers, particularly when known to them; they are very religious, and constant in their devotions at church;—most of the ladies attend divine service morning and evening every day, and their exterior behaviour is as modest and becoming as I ever witnessed. The three clergymen of the place did me the honour of calling upon me the day after my arrival; they are intelligent men, well disposed to the foreigners whom Mr. Wilcox has brought among them, but regretted they were not Christians, a name given in this country only to members of the church of Rome. The introduction of the steam-engine has excited the greatest curiosity among the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, the major part of whom do not believe half the extraordinary tales related by the workmen of the

uses for which steam is employed. When told that the cotton of which their clothes are made, the hardware on the table, and most of the luxuries in Europe, are produced by its application, they look at you with astonishment; and when assured that by the same agency, we travel at the rate of nearly 200 miles a day, with certainty and safety, without more inconvenience than remaining in our own houses, they shake their heads, and say, "When you have by means of *hot water* drawn all the *cold water* from our mines, we will believe you, but not till then: what you tell us is not an article of faith, and therefore you must excuse our doubts." I hope and trust their doubts will, in a few months, be dispelled, as Mr. Wilcox has nearly surmounted the difficulties he had to encounter in bringing the large pieces of his steam-engine from Vera Cruz to this place; much of it had arrived, and I saw the re-

mainder within a few leagues of the mine. The beam, placed on a waggon and drawn by nineteen mules, passed us on the road. Most sincerely do I hope, and firmly do I believe, that the spirited undertaking of this gentleman will fully answer his purpose, and that his example will be followed by hundreds of others, to the advantage not merely of themselves, but reciprocally to that of the two countries in general.

On the 4th of July I left Themascaltepec, on my return to Mexico and England, after an absence of little more than seven months, during the greater part of which I had been busily engaged in Mexico, collecting every thing requisite to form the Exhibition now open in the Egyptian Hall, in the hope of showing the British public whatever was most interesting in this extraordinary and almost unknown country. A few hours brought us to my favourite Indian village of St. Miguel.

Here we were instantly surrounded by the alcalde and our friends, who began to prepare dinner for us; and whilst Mr. Goulde was employed in engaging forty of the people, and fourteen oxen, to proceed to meet the machinery of the engine, and assist in removing it through the woods to the village, I strolled with my gun over the plain to the neighbouring woods, and procured some of the birds which now form a part of my Exhibition. In this ramble I was followed by numbers of young men and boys: their delight and astonishment at seeing a bird killed whilst flying was so great, that it was a long time before they could be quieted. Each bird was brought home for me by a separate bearer; and, on our arrival at the village, the detail of the wonderful manner in which it was killed was recounted with great animation to their friends. The Indians remained with us till after supper, when as

usual we received their "*Buenos Noche*," and retired to rest; but many of them were in attendance before daybreak to see us on the road; we took an early and a hearty breakfast, and then left these good people,—I hope not for the last time. Nothing can exceed the beauty of the road from thence to the city of Toluca; the woods are the most elevated as well as the grandest in Mexico; and the number and beauty of the flowers that appeared in much novelty at almost every quarter of a mile excited in us the greatest admiration. A botanist might have added several hundreds of new plants, of considerable beauty, to our gardens in this morning's ride. The temperature here being fully as cold in summer as in England, they might, I have little doubt, be permanently secured: how much did I regret that circumstances prevented my effecting this! I have however brought home some, and still hope to be the

means of obtaining the whole. Near the village I found two kinds of potatoes, but without bulbous roots, growing wild, and in the woods strawberries of fine flavour, as well as gooseberries, currants, and abundance of grapes, and the scarlet kidney-bean, with its bright red blossom, in every hedge. Passing through Toluca, we reached Lerma early, and got a comfortable supper; but the next morning being Sunday, our landlady as usual refused us our breakfast till we had been to church. We arrived at the hacienda within fifteen miles of Mexico, and dined on very fine frogs from the lake. I thought them superior to those of Europe; to my friends they were new, but they seemed to make their acquaintance with much satisfaction. We now descended the mountains that bound the valley, with the rich prospect of the lakes and city before us; and in the afternoon observed a most curious and beautiful phenomenon.

In the sky, on the opposite side of the lake, apparently near Tezcuco, the clouds had assumed a remarkable density of appearance, and the usual distant thunder announced the approach of rain ; the lightning showed itself in broad sheets, quivering between the moving clouds, which, suddenly opening, discovered a large mass of the most vivid and strongly contrasted colours, greatly resembling the rainbow, but of ten times greater size and brilliancy. It continued about ten minutes and then suddenly disappeared. I observed a similar effect afterwards, on the day I left Mexico for Vera Cruz. On reaching the city, we learnt that his Majesty's ship *Phaeton* was on the coast, and would take a convoy of silver, then preparing to leave Mexico, and as my friend was going to Vera Cruz, we immediately determined to proceed together, and accordingly engaged a carriage to depart on the 19th instant.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Return from Mexico to Xalapa.

ON the 19th of July, accompanied by Messrs. Bates and Snyders, I left Mexico in a carriage drawn by eight mules, by the high road for Vera Cruz. We halted for a short time at Ayotla, close to the lake of Chalco, when parting with my son and Mr. Gillow, who had accompanied us thus far on horseback, we proceeded a few miles farther to a large hacienda, where we proposed to pass the night. On approaching it we were struck with the sound of a large bell, which continued to be rung with great force. Having unloaded our carriage and entered the house,

we inquired of the ringer the cause of his continual exertion, when we were informed that his master was getting in part of his harvest, and being fearful of the approaching rain, he was employed to keep it off, and that the bell had been blessed for that purpose by a bishop. We smiled, but were soon convinced of its efficacy, as not a drop of rain fell, and we enjoyed the benefit of the ringing in rabbit-shooting among the large maguey plantations near the house, and in the rich and magnificent prospects which surround the place. When returning we observed two persons arrive on horseback ; one of them had a letter for me from Mr. Ruperti of Mexico, which was to recommend and introduce the bearer Jose Cayetano Ponce de Leon, an Indian from the village of Chiaula, near Tezcucó, who wished to accompany me to England as a domestic. He had been informed that I wanted to engage a person of his nation, and

had been to his native place to solicit permission from his parents, and the blessing of the padre, or priest; which having obtained, together with a good stock of advice respecting his conduct among the people he was about to visit, (whom I believe his friends looked upon in little better light than we do on the Esquimaux), he courageously set off to join me; and I was glad to accept of his services, as he was the only one who could be persuaded to cross the terrific "Green Waters" to the other side of the world.

There was a military post stationed at the hacienda, for the purpose of protecting the roads. We supped with our host, an intelligent old man, who entertained us for some time with the history of the revolution, and the severe losses he had in consequence sustained. The next morning we slowly ascended the mountains that enclosed the valley of Tenochtitlan, and for the last time enjoyed the sub-

lime view over the expanse of its lake; the sun was just rising on the snow-capped summit of the volcano of Popocatepetl, whose crater, 17,875 feet above the level of the sea, appeared to be but at the distance of a few miles. We soon reached the district of pines and oaks, passed the fine woods mentioned in our journey from the coast, and about two o'clock reached Rio Frio, and proceeded on the way for St. Martin's; but the fore-part of the carriage having come in contact with a large stone on the road, it broke, and we with some difficulty got the empty vehicle back to the posada, where a person was found to repair it. We were detained till the following day, which afforded me an opportunity of procuring several good birds, and among them the crimson-throated humming bird, which I never met with but in high cold situations, where I several times shot it on the ground, on which the other species seldom if ever alight. We

shot here also a curious variety of the golden-winged woodpecker, a fine blue species of motacilla, and two kinds of blue jays, all undescribed. We had some difficulty in procuring shelter for the night, as every part of the house was occupied by a party of military, who were, like ourselves, proceeding to Puebla. Several of the officers joined us in the evening, and partook very willingly of some excellent corned boiled beef, which was a rarity they had not tasted before; it had been furnished us for our journey by the kindness of the celebrated American General Wilkinson. Neither had they any objection to a share of the small stock of sherry we had brought with us. One of them had been in the Peninsular war, had seen a British army, and spoke with rapture of the Duke of Wellington; we conversed till a late hour, and parted good friends. The next morning brought us to our old quarters, St. Martin's,

just in time to catch a glimpse of a returning procession. In an hour afterwards the town was brilliantly illuminated, and, when seen at a little distance, appeared in a flame; the whole church, steeple, tower, and battlements, had small fires of candle-wood, and a large one was placed before every house; the air was filled with rockets, and numerous bands of music paraded the streets. The *ensemble* was much grander than our country towns can boast on similar occasions, the tallow candles of which would make but a sorry figure when compared with a thousand piles of flaming candle-wood.

We arrived the next day about noon at Puebla de los Angeles, and drove to the principal inn; having seen our baggage deposited in safety, (which it is quite requisite every traveller should do), I immediately called on Don Sebastian Furlong, whose politeness I had occasion to mention on my

first visit to this city. He had procured for me some models, executed from life in a very curious manner in cloth, by a lady of the city, whom I had seen but for a few minutes on my former visit, yet on my return she presented me with a portrait of myself, made of cloth, and so good a likeness as to be instantly recognised. I called on my young friend Don Marianna Call, who, in my absence, had obtained for me a MS. map of the city, and other valuable drawings and papers. This young gentleman speaks the English language, a very rare acquirement in Mexico, and his knowledge of European history and science is equalled by few of his countrymen. We took tea in the English fashion with the gentleman with whom I formerly resided, who provided us with an excellent carriage and mules for our journey to Xalapa the next morning. It was my wish to have remained here a few days, for the purpose of visiting the Indian city of Tlas-

calla, distant about eighteen miles, the inhabitants of which are wholly of the original unmixed race, and are said to retain the ancient privilege, granted to them by the conquerors, of enjoying all the customs of their forefathers without innovation, always excepting such as regard religion, the Spaniards having reduced the whole people, throughout their immense colonies in America, to the profession of the Catholic faith. Unfortunately, the anxiety of my companions to reach the end of their journey prevented me the gratification of seeing this interesting people, and we set off early the following morning. Soon after leaving the city our drivers (the same, father and son, who had taken us to Mexico) left the high road by a smaller one to the left, which led us over a rich and populous country, through several villages surrounded by plantations and finely cultivated lands; but having regained the highway, and passing many deep

ravines and places said to be dangerous from being the resort of robbers, we arrived at Napaluca. Here we spent the night, and starting early the next morning, took some refreshment at Ocho de Agua. Journeying over the arid plain mentioned in page 73, of Vol. I. we again witnessed the extraordinary effects of a whirlwind, though not to so great a degree as before, owing probably to the rainy season, in consequence of which much of the ground, before parched up, was now covered with verdant turf; among this we observed a species of ground-squirrel, very numerous, but so shy that we could not procure one with the gun; we however killed two vultures and several hawks from the coach window. We halted half an hour at Perote: it appeared to greater advantage than the last time we passed it. Here I procured the skin of a lynx, recently killed in the neighbourhood, where I was told it is not uncommon. We reached the volcanic

region of Los Vegas just before the rain set in; here we spent the night, and saw the last plantation of the aloe that produces the pulque; we left this place early, and experienced so much inconvenience from the cold as made it necessary for us to use our great coats; we began our rapid descent towards the sea, and having crossed the crater of the volcano (described in Vol. I. p. 65), a few hours again brought us into a warm climate, vegetation assuming a different character every hour, and the scenery becoming the most delightful and romantic that the mind can well conceive. We arrived at Xalapa about mid-day, the principal part of this day's journey being over a fine causeway which was made about twenty years since.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Xalapa.—General Victoria.—Rural Fête.—Religious Fête and Ceremony at Telotepec.—Visit to a Cavern, and Valley of Lava.—Departure for Vera Cruz.

ON arriving at Xalapa, we drove to the house of Donna Guadaloupe Rosa, the lady with whom we had formerly resided, who again received us into her dwelling, in which we invariably received the most polite attention from herself and numerous family. We found several English on their road to the capital, and among them Dr. Mackie, the British Envoy, whom I mentioned on my arrival at Vera Cruz. He was now executing the object of a mission with which he was entrusted by the British Government, having fortunately

met here General Victoria, the chief of the Executive Government, with whom he usually spent the evenings, without the object of his voyage being even surmised in the city: I have reason to believe that the Doctor's exertions were attended with complete success, and that the commercial interests between England and Mexico will be mutually benefited by them; especially as he was received by General Victoria*, in his official capacity, with the greatest pleasure, and his opinion of the advantages to be derived from a connexion with this country duly appreciated.

General Victoria is a native of Durrango, in New Spain, and of a highly respectable family. On the breaking out of the revolution, in 1810, he had just finished his studies, and

* Since elected President of the United Federal Republic of Mexico. The author has to acknowledge his obligation to the general for several valuable natural productions now in his collection.

decided on taking an active part, in liberating his country from the Spanish yoke. No native has been so conspicuous in the long and arduous struggle, or has acquired the confidence of the people in a greater degree, than he has. A real well-wisher to the cause of rational liberty, coolness and determination in the hour of danger, and an ardent desire to form a connexion with this country, have ever been the leading features of his character. The moment he considered the views of the ex-emperor injurious to the rights of the people, he publicly denounced him, on which he was arrested and confined ; but his friends enabled him to escape from prison, and to proceed a second time for concealment to the woods between Xalapa and Vera Cruz, where he had formerly been for thirty months without having seen the face of a human creature, being proscribed, and an immense price set on his head, by the Spanish Viceroy. His

privations and sufferings during that period almost exceed credibility, his precarious existence depending on vegetables and insects, procured in the forests where he remained, without the smallest communication with his fellow-creatures. In consequence of his mental and corporeal sufferings, he was at one time attacked by fever, and remained eleven days at the entrance of a cavern, stretched on the ground without food, hourly expecting a termination of his wretched existence: indeed, so near to death was he, that the vultures were constantly hovering over him in expectation of their prey. The first nourishment he received was the warm blood of one of these birds, which had approached to feast on his half-closed eyes, when he seized him by the neck, and was by means of this sustenance enabled to crawl to the nearest water to slake his parching thirst. After the expulsion of the Spaniards, an old and faithful Indian dis-

covered his retreat, and with the greatest difficulty recognised his person, which was destitute of clothes, and so altered in appearance, that he retained scarcely any resemblance of a human being.

A few days after our arrival we were informed that a rural fête and bull-fight would be given on the following Sunday, in honour of the general, at a village about three leagues from hence, to which Messrs. Snyders and Bates offered to accompany me.

After a hearty breakfast on a broiled armadillo, I set off on horseback, with my friends, to Quatlepec. The morning was unclouded, and our road lay over a most lovely and variegated country. All travellers speak of the neighbourhood of Xalapa with delight, and with great reason; an eternal, never-interrupted spring reigns here; the fields are always covered with verdure, and the woods abound with flowers, blossoms, and fruits.

The general aspect of the country, in this day's excursion, reminded me strongly of the finest parts of Devonshire; but the hills are smaller, more diversified, and clothed with trees, shrubs, and flowers, in such endless variety, that no part of Europe can vie with it. In our short ride we passed over fertile plains covered with fields of the finest maize (now nearly ripe), and studded with Indian cottages; through deep sombre woods composed of the noblest and most picturesque trees,—lofty pines and oaks, with the tree that produces the liquid amber, and the elegant fern tree, with its waving, light, feathery branches (nine or ten feet long), formed a conspicuous part. We crossed several streams of water, which, rushing over rocks far beneath us, added much to the beauty of the scene. The whole country is of volcanic origin, and we passed several small craters, now covered with rich soil and

the finest vegetation. We observed many new and showy birds, and the air absolutely swarmed with myriads of the most splendid butterflies. A gentle progress of two hours brought us to the village, situated in a plain; we had entered it some time without perceiving it, the houses being so enveloped by the gardens with which they are surrounded, and the luxuriance of the foliage such as almost to exclude them from sight. Lemons, oranges, avocatas, and sapotas were the common fences of this village, which supplies a great portion of the markets of Xalapa. When we arrived in the principal street, which is of considerable length and leads to the square or plaza, where the houses are not surrounded with trees like the others, we found the whole place alive and crowded with people, anxiously waiting to catch a sight of their favourite and popular chief. The street had numerous rustic triumphal

arches, formed of various-coloured draperies, entwined with branches of trees and the most showy flowers, and decorated with various mottos and inscriptions, indicating their attachment to the man who had suffered so much in the cause of liberty and the love of his country. There was scarcely a house which had not been whitewashed for the occasion, and which did not display some testimony of the joy of its inhabitants; and the crowds of Indians in their holyday dresses showed the interest felt by the whole of the neighbourhood. On reaching the plaza, we found a space about the size of Covent Garden, enclosed with rails and palisadoes firmly bound together by a kind of vine or creeper. This was the intended scene of action for the bull-fight: we passed through it, and, having procured a place of security and some provender for our horses, took a ramble through the village. In a short time the firing of rockets, the sound of music,

and the shouts of the people, announced the approach of the general and his friends, preceded by an extensive band of native musicians, and a troop—not of soldiers, but of Indian girls, handsomely dressed, strewing flowers, waving banners, and shaking a sort of rattle, similar to those used by the Indians of St. Miguel de las Ranchos in their nocturnal dances. The general was hailed by the populace with marks of genuine love; and many to whom he was personally known shed tears of joy. I had been introduced to him a few evenings before; he recognised me, and a few minutes after sent for me to partake of the refreshment prepared for him. He seated me near him, served me himself, and I never felt more honoured than on this occasion. Being the only Englishman present, I considered it a tribute rather paid to my country than to myself. Whilst at table, despatches arrived from Mexico for the general, and he retired to examine the contents; and, shortly

after, the amusement (if bull-fighting can be so termed) commenced, by one of the eight or ten unfortunate animals, selected for that purpose and confined in an enclosure, being turned into the larger ring: they appeared of a light active breed, like our Scotch black cattle, and not at all vicious, till, tormented to madness by the injuries of the assailants, they attacked indiscriminately whatever came in their way. At its first entrance the affrighted animal galloped round the space, endeavouring to find a place to escape from the crowd of men on horseback who pursued it; it then endeavoured to force its way to its companions, but being driven back with spears, sticks, and stones, it crossed the arena to some houses, whose fronts were included in the fence. The poor brute seemed at the door to supplicate assistance, and tried to force an entrance, but in vain; he was caught by the lassos of the horsemen, entangled and thrown

down ; the points of his horns sawed off, and again turned loose, his torments were renewed by men with spears wounding him in various parts of the body. He at length became perfectly furious, tore the ground with his feet, bellowed hideously, and attacked every thing that approached him ; but the number of his assailants was such, that his attention was drawn from one to the other : I saw nothing to admire, either in the courage or agility of all this, which appeared to me to be merely a cowardly and barbarous pastime. One gentleman should perhaps be excepted from the general censure. He waited on one side of the arena till the bull approached him with violence, when, taking off his mantle and holding it up, the animal instantly leaped at him, but, turning with a slight easy motion, he dexterously avoided the stroke of his horns, and laid the mantle on his head ; this was repeated so

often, that the bull refused to attack him any longer, and was taken away by ropes, confined, and a girth put round him. A fellow then, having a large pair of spurs on, mounted the bull, which, set at liberty, renewed his efforts by endeavouring in vain to dismount his rider, at the same time dashing at every one who came near him; this was continued till the exertions of the animal had exhausted him to such a degree that he had scarcely sufficient strength to stand, and he was hauled back to his companions more dead than alive, and another brought from the enclosure to undergo the same torment; but we had seen enough to satisfy our curiosity, and left them to finish their unmanly sport. The only thing in which it was to be preferred to the bull-fight in the capital, or in Old Spain, was that, though there was not that display of personal prowess and dexterity shown in those arenas, yet they

were not guilty of the same horrible scenes of carnage; there were no tearing, mangling, or killing of bulls, no horses trailing their entrails after them, or wounded or dying matadores, which gave such exquisite delight in Mexico and Madrid; but as far as their courage or intentions went, they were equally contemptible, and we left the valley with less pleasure than we entered it. Our ride back through this beautiful country restored us however to good humour, and I am convinced would, to nine-tenths of the inhabitants of our little isle, be far more gratifying than the sight of all the mangled carcasses of men, horses, and bulls, that have delighted the Spaniards since the time of the Moors.

CHAPTER XXX.

Excursion to Tilotepec, and Religious Fête of the Indians.

EVERY day my surprise is increased at the beauties of this delightful neighbourhood. This morning Mr. Hall, of Vera Cruz, called on me to accompany him to an hacienda, a league on the road to Mexico: but finding on our arrival that the family were gone a league farther, to the Indian village of Tilotepec, the inhabitants of which celebrated the fête of their patron-saint this day, —we took some refreshment and proceeded; and never shall I forget the scenery of the place, nor the happiness and simplicity of the multitudes by whom its streets were

thronged. A little more than a league from Xalapa, the road to Tilotepec turns off to the right, and a few hundred yards bring you to the edge of the hill on which you have been travelling. On a sudden the whole valley of Tilotepec, with the village and church, breaks on the astonished eye of the traveller: those who have seen some of the finest situations in Switzerland may form an idea of this romantic vale, surrounded and shut in by towering cliffs and pinnacled volcanic mountains of the most romantic forms, and covered with the richest tropical vegetation. The town, with its crowded streets, perfectly distinct, lay almost beneath our feet; but, at an amazing depth, in the front of the elegant little church, rises a sugar-loaf mountain, with steps cut in the solid rock, crowned by a temple, built in good taste,—a Spanish erection soon after the Conquest; and directly behind the town,

descending from the high impending cliffs, is seen an amazingly fine waterfall, dashing its white foam in five distinct steps into the valley, a sight very unusual in Mexico. We commenced our winding descent by a steep road through the woods which form the concave sides of this part,—the scene on our way was frequently obscured by the waving feather-like branches of the fern tree, or the luxuriance of the various climbing plants that formed canopies over our heads: half an hour's journey brought us to a stream of water, from which, after a small ascent, we entered the town close to the church, at the time the procession was setting forwards,—to the surprise of the inhabitants, to whom the face of a stranger is a rarity. The space in front of the churchyard, the gates, &c., were prepared for an extensive display of fire-works, and decorated with the choicest wild flowers, palm branches, &c., and every

house had been ornamented for the occasion, and exhibited chaplets of flowers. We had rode through great part of the town, but were summoned back to the church by a discharge of rockets, and the sound of music, announcing the commencement of the procession, the sight of which gave me much greater pleasure than any I had witnessed in the great cities: it was the sacrifice, to the Almighty, of a simple, innocent, and happy people, who were performing a religious duty to their Creator, in a manner which to them appeared likely to be most acceptable to him. The procession consisted of several thousand Indians, perfectly clean, orderly, and well dressed; it was preceded by four trumpeters in plain black dresses, followed by about fifty men, after whom came the patron-saint, borne by eight Indian girls, handsomely clothed, holding chaplets of flowers, and followed by

four hundred women, each wearing over their usual dresses a manga of white cotton, of their own manufacture, uniformly embroidered with green and crimson wool, and having their fine shining black hair braided, with red tape, into two long tresses, which fell over their shoulders almost to the ground. They marched four abreast, in a steady solemn manner, each bearing a lighted wax candle; followed by a strong band of musicians, consisting entirely of wind instruments. After these came the men, in regular order, followed by the statue of the Virgin, and several of the clergy, the whole closed by another band of music, principally violins; and on each side of the procession, at regular distances, were children carrying baskets of flowers. Having made the circuit of the town, they returned to the church, when the fire-works were displayed, and a general discharge of rockets announced the close of the

solemnity. We ascended the steps of the conical rock near the church with difficulty, in order to enjoy the prospect from the temple on its summit; and found within it the remains of a fire, and one of the large wooden upright drums used by the ancient Mexicans, and described by Bernal Dias in his account of the siege of the capital; it was the only one we had seen. On descending, the town presented a different appearance to what it had done an hour before; every house was a scene of merriment and feasting, even the sides of the streets were crowded by groups of Indian families enjoying their dinners; some were a little merry with pulque and a pleasant liquor prepared from the dregs of newly distilled spirits; but none were rude—all was happiness and pleasure. We partook of the general hilarity, and my friend Hall was fully occupied in dancing with several pretty Indian girls whilst I employed myself in

making these notes, in which I was however interrupted several times by intimations that it was not here the custom to write letters on feast-days. In the afternoon our host and his family took us to examine the waterfall, and then to visit the padre of the parish, who, on being informed by Mr. Hall of the object of my visit, told me that, when a young man, he had visited a very curious cavern a few miles distant, in which report said was concealed part of Montezuma's treasure, and that it had in heathen times been the residence of a celebrated hermit, and still contained statues and idols; but that the place was so concealed by nature, and so seldom an object of curiosity, that only a few persons in the district near it could point out the spot. He promised however to write to the clergyman of the parish for guides to meet us at his house, in order to conduct us to it. A little before dark our whole party

were mounted, and, winding up the sides of the hill, soon reached the hacienda, where we halted a short time, and were early at Xalapa, where our report of the cave and its treasures procured us many offers of company to examine it. In two days after, we received a letter from the good padre, saying that all would be ready on the following day, when we set off, about a dozen in company, and arrived early at Tlotepec, where we met four Indian guides, and our party was increased to nearly twenty persons, some of whom carried a plentiful supply of provisions, &c., under the superintendence of our friend Don Juan Hall, as he was here called. On first leaving the town, our route lay through a fertile valley for a short mile, when, having passed what was pointed out as a silver mine, we began a steep ascent over a ridge of low hills on a very indifferent road, the higher part of which was cut through the rock, and

was so narrow that two horses could with difficulty pass each other. When the road opened at the top of the hill the prospect was most enchanting,—sweeping down a long valley, to which we descended, to an hacienda in one of the finest situations imaginable. It was nearly under a high ridge of mountains, whose perpendicular cliffs reached almost to the clouds: the face of the lofty crags was thickly wooded, and from the top poured a cascade to a great depth, but which was lost in the foliage before it reached the ground. Part of the hacienda was used as a distillery, and our party were invited to take refreshment at it :—a very pleasant liquor, much resembling new cider, was produced, and in one part of the enclosed square a quantity of coffee, grown in the neighbourhood, was drying in the shade. Soon after leaving this house we found the road so precipitous and steep that our horses had difficulty in pro-

ceeding, amidst huge masses of solid and compact lava, which rose on all sides and in every form: yet among these masses many neat cottages were seen, surrounded with an appearance of plenty not often met with in such situations. When we came to the top of the hill, such a scene presented itself as I can convey no idea of by description. If I was surprised in passing the crater of the volcano, in my way to Perote, I was perfectly astonished here at beholding the contents probably of that very crater before me, filling an extensive valley, of many leagues in length, with an immense sea of melted lava, which, from the slope of the mountain that bounded it, I should judge in several places to be many hundred fathoms thick, converting what had been a deep valley into a vast plain of solid rock, on whose surface the marks of its progress and violent agitation, when in a state of fusion, are as fresh as if

the event had taken place but yesterday, except that in some places a few stunted and scanty specimens of vegetation appeared in some of the fissures of the iron-like lava. We rode on for about a mile and a half with tolerable ease, when the route gradually became worse: it began to assume a wave-like appearance, and the cracks or fissures were so large that our horses were in momentary danger of falling into them, so that it was impossible to take them farther; we therefore left them with the Indians who had the charge of our dinner, and despatched three of our guides to the cavern, to prepare the way to the entrance, now about a mile distant, and to which, they informed us, it was necessary to clear the road with axes from the vegetation which had choked it up. We accordingly rested about half an hour, which gave me time to examine the place where we had halted; and it certainly exhibited one of

the most extraordinary and wonderful effects of the convulsions of nature that had ever come under my observation. The basaltic formation of the Giant's Causeway, of Staffa, or the more gigantic one of the Shant Isles, falls far short of the wondrous appearance of this valley. On our first entrance upon it, the lava appeared to have cooled into almost a quiescent state, its surface being only marked by slight concentric circles; but in a short time these increased in size and rose in sharp ridges to the height of several feet, and occasionally swelled in the bubble-like forms seen in the crater; to these succeeded large waves rising to a considerable height, their tops rent into the most fantastic shapes; in other places the lava exhibited the appearance of huge boiling cauldrons, which had burst, and emptied themselves in violent torrents. On the left, near the edges, cataracts of several hundred yards wide had swept

down immense masses of broken rocks, some of them of many hundred tons weight;—these, floating like corks on the melted lava, had met with some impediment in their way, and remained piled upon each other by the impetuous burning stream, in the most extraordinary manner, leaving to distant ages these striking proofs of the horrid combustion of internal subterraneous fires, by which the higher mountain districts have been formed.

One of our guides returned to say they had found the cave, and to accompany us to it: we commenced our short journey over the scene of desolation I have been attempting to describe, but we moved forward with difficulty, as, independent of the steep and sharp precipices we had to cross, there was much danger of falling into the deep fissures and rents formed by the cooling and shrinking of the melted matter which occupied the whole valley.

We at length arrived opposite the mouth of the cave, which a smoke made by the Indians pointed out to us. It was situated about 150 feet high, on the steep side of the ridge of mountains that form the valley, amidst a thick cover of trees and underwood, in a place where there was not the slightest indication of its existence. To this it was necessary for us to climb in an almost perpendicular direction, obstructed by the roots of fallen trees often piled together or lying one over the other; in some parts it would have been impossible to have forced a passage, had not the Indians with their bills cut down the opposing bushes. Completely exhausted, breathless, and soaked in perspiration, I lay down as soon as I reached a spot where it could be done in safety, as in the ascent the ground was so soft that we sunk knee-deep, when unsupported by the roots and branches on its surface. After

cooling for a few minutes, our flambeaus of torchwood were lighted; we entered the cavern and were greatly disappointed in our object, as the cave, though the wonder of the neighbourhood, did not repay us for the labour of climbing to it. It was in a rock of limestone of no great size or depth:—some large mutilated pieces of stalactite on the floor and low roof had been magnified into statues and gods; the rest was all imagination, and we soon prepared to return to the place where we had left our horses. Mexico is not the country of caverns, and therefore this trifling den is esteemed a miracle, whilst the really curious valley we passed in our way to it, being every day before the eyes of the natives, excites no surprise, and is never mentioned. Round the mouth of the cave, and in our descent towards it, we noticed many fine trees, different from any we had yet seen: one was very remarkable, the stem of which

was as thick as a man's arm, covered from the ground to the height of four or five feet by what appeared at a little distance to be a gelatinous substance, of a pale pink colour, but on closer inspection was found to consist of thick clusters of fruit, resembling small raspberries, in such quantities as to produce this effect. Much fatigued, we reached our horses, and found an excellent hot dinner and a few bottles of sherry, to which ample justice was done by the whole party. This welcome task over, most of the company took their siesta, or afternoon's nap, on the bare lava, and it was near sun-set before we commenced our return. After leading our horses a short distance over the most rugged part, we were enabled to mount, and soon reached Tilotepec, and at the end of a pleasant evening's ride came to Xalapa, tired, but delighted with the ocean of stone on which we had spent great part of the day;—I shall

however never recollect this excursion but with pleasure.

Soon after my arrival here, I received a letter from Captain Sturt, of his Majesty's ship *Phaeton*, then off Vera Cruz, stating that he was going down to Tampico, but should shortly return to take in a cargo of dollars, and then sail direct for England; politely offering at the same time to convey me and the articles I had collected to Portsmouth free of expense. This determined me to wait here till the *Phaeton* returned, as the security of sailing in a British frigate, through seas infested by pirates, was, independent of other advantages, sufficient to induce me to avail myself of Captain Sturt's kindness. Dr. Mackie also intended to proceed to England in the same ship, and the society of a gentleman so long a resident in, and so well acquainted with most parts of New Spain, was another powerful motive with me for accepting this pro-

posal. I had now time to make little excursions with my gun in the neighbourhood, and to add to my collection of birds and seeds. I also began to be known to the Indians who supplied the market with game, and procured many interesting animals by their means, till the yard and court of my hostess began to have the appearance of a menagerie, as I had already several armadillos, deers, parrots, cur-rassow birds, quans, tiger-cats, &c., &c., most of which were unconfined, and, with my extensive collection of preserved animals, which were generally exposed to the air, excited the curiosity of the neighbourhood, which could assign no possible use for such things excepting that they might be intended for medicinal purposes.

On my return to Xalapa, I was immediately struck with the alteration that had taken place in the appearance of many of the ladies during the short time of my absence.

Instead of their universally appearing in black, as formerly, many were now to be seen in the last fashions of England, in white muslins, printed calicoes, and other manufactures of Manchester and Glasgow; and the public promenade on the evening of a Sunday or holyday presented an appearance of gaiety hitherto unknown. On inquiring the cause of this change, I was informed that it principally arose from the volumes of Ackermann's work on Fashions which I had brought with me from England, and the arrival of an English lady, whose newly imported wardrobe had made a hasty tour through most of the respectable houses in the city, and from which the belles had taken their new costumes. I believe a few of our dashing milliners, with a tolerable stock in trade, would soon realize a good property, and by introducing British manufactures where they are at present little known, add considerably to their consumption :

the revolution in dress and fashion will probably be as great as that in politics, but I sincerely hope it will change more frequently.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Journey from Xalapa to Vera Cruz.—Road to Mexico.
—Duties and Expenses on Merchandise.—Contraband
Trade.—Mines.

HAVING received advice of the arrival of the Phaeton, I left Xalapa with Dr. Mackie, on the morning of the 22d of August, in a litter carried between two mules, something in the manner of a sedan chair: these are of sufficient length to lie down in, and when two persons travel together, they place themselves opposite each other. The litter has a roof and curtains of strong canvas to exclude the sun or rain: we had two sets of mules, which relieved each other, and baggage-mules for our servants and luggage, besides three drivers, and a person

who superintended the whole. We had therefore nine mules and four persons employed for the transport of what, in England, would easily have been accomplished with a chaise and one pair of horses.

We reached Puente del Rey the first evening, having performed great part of the journey on the noble causeway made about twenty years since, most of which is still in good repair ; and the whole way to the Puente might be made a fine road, by connecting the unfinished parts on the M'Adamizing principle, as plenty of good materials are to be found near it. The road now presented a very different appearance from what it did when we passed up from the coast, owing to the rains, which had covered places, that were before parched up and burnt, with the finest verdure, and with a profusion of elegant plants, among which a great variety of mimosas seemed to predominate. I procured seeds of some of

them, and during this day's journey saw the only dangerous serpent I had met with in the country: it was of a small size, and brilliantly coloured with alternate rings of black and scarlet. Our guides and several Indians declared it to be extremely venomous, but the appearance of its teeth did not prove it; it is called the coral snake both in the country and by naturalists.

We took supper, and rested our mules till two o'clock, when travelling over a tolerable road till near daylight, we came to several bad swampy places, where the mules had considerable difficulty in making their way through the water and mud: one of them fell, and it caused some trouble to raise it and proceed. In another place the litter had to be raised higher on the backs of the mules, to prevent the water from entering; this part of the road, lying through a low flat morass, will with difficulty be made good for carriages

in the wet season, as there are no materials near to raise it above the surrounding swamp. After getting through it, the road became better, and the mosquitoes which had annoyed us disappeared. We halted at Santa Fè to breakfast, and a short ride brought us to a sudden opening of the road, and gave us a view of the sea, Vera Cruz, and the castle of St. Juan de Ullua, with his Majesty's frigate *Phaeton* lying between them. My Indian servant was surprised at the appearance of the calm unruffled surface of the ocean, and eagerly inquired if that was the blue water, and exclaimed, "What a beautiful country!" comparing the frigate, to which his whole attention was directed, to a palace. We reached the city gates about one o'clock, an hour at which they are closed; after some little difficulty we obtained admission, and arrived at the house of Mr. Stuart, where Dr. Mackie was to remain. I was recommended to the

good fathers of the Franciscan convent, near the gate leading to the pier, and taking up my quarters with them, lived as comfortably for the time I remained as the excessive heat of the climate would permit.

I found, on my return, that several respectable English mercantile houses had been established during my short absence, and that others were preparing ; strong hopes were entertained that the heavy import duties would shortly be lessened, and that the facilities for transporting goods into the interior would be increased. A plan for the establishment of waggons on the great road to the capital had been partially acted on by some gentlemen from the United States, and promised to be successful, especially if the roads were put into a state of repair, and a few of the unfinished points of connexion completed, which would not be attended with any very considerable expense, with the exception of one

place, as it lies principally through a populous country, abounding with good stone for the purpose. If the persons who now crowd the prisons of the large towns, mostly for robberies, could be so employed, it might be advantageous to the people, and would effect the requisite repairs in a few months. Or if once the independence of this valuable country is acknowledged by England, a company might be formed for effecting so very desirable a work, which would amply repay the expenditure. Without it, the conveyance of the heavy cast iron machinery of the steam-engines, with the necessary iron tools, &c., for the mines now about to be opened, will be a labour of great difficulty.

The duties and other expenses on the landing of goods at Vera Cruz are enormously high, and tend much to discourage the mercantile speculator; eight and a half per cent. *ad valorem* is paid on all cargoes from Europe,

at the Spanish castle of St. Juan de Ullua, and twenty-seven and a half to the town. This too is on their own arbitrary valuation, and is often three times the original cost. One dollar each package is charged for the hospital, and four and a half dollars per ton on the ship, according to her register; three rials per ton for water; eight dollars for the captain of the port; and thirty-two dollars each trip for the use of large boats for landing the cargo: to these may be added the expense of porterage to the custom-house, and afterwards to the stores of the merchants; for even this is expensive, as labour of all kinds is here excessively high, and the insolence of the negro porters is intolerable. The above are the principal charges at the port, to which the removal of goods to Mexico adds much, as they pay an additional duty of about twelve per cent. on their arrival, and the carriage of every horse or mule-load, from

two to three hundred weight, is from eighteen to twenty-two dollars. The goods sold in Mexico pay again another duty on being removed to the provinces; but if they are intended, when landed, to be removed direct to the cities beyond Mexico, an arrangement can be made at the port custom-house which will save some of the expenses.

Much trouble and vexatious delay may also be prevented, on the part of the owner of goods, by employing a respectable resident broker. Some newly arrived supercargoes, who chose to conduct their own business at the custom-house, assured me they had lost much time and had saved nothing by their labour.

The contraband trade carried on at the castle is a source of considerable loss and trouble to the fair trader, as it is notorious that, by intriguing with its officers of the customs, goods to a vast amount may be clandestinely conveyed into the country.

They are generally landed at the castle first, till an opportunity offers for their removal, when they are taken in the night to the beach above or below the town. I slept some nights after my arrival at Vera Cruz on board the vessel that took me out; she was moored under the walls of the castle, and near us was a Spanish ship of war, which was employed regularly in this way in secretly discharging a cargo of brandies. It is principally the Spanish merchants who are thus enabled to avoid the heavy duties and charges demanded by the Mexican government, and who, by these means, are competent to undersell the fair trader in the article of his own manufacture. This state of things cannot be of long continuance; half a dozen English frigates, properly applied, would afford relief in a few hours, and purge New Spain of the only place now held by her former masters. The state of trade has already undergone as great

a change as the politics of Mexico, and the mere introduction of our fashions will cause a more extensive demand for our manufactures. It would be difficult to point out such things as will be most proper for exports ; but persons embarking their property in American speculations should remember that markets may be easily overstocked,—they should likewise make themselves acquainted with such articles as are in general demand, and also with what are not in use. Grates, fire-irons, fenders, and hearth-rugs, have been sent to people who never saw a fire-place or a chimney, and knives and forks to persons who scarcely know the use of them.

The prosperity of Mexico must always depend on the cultivation of her immense mineral wealth. The silver mines have already produced more riches than those of any other portion of the globe, and more rapid fortunes have been made by individuals than

are possessed by any in Europe. The mine of Valenciana, which may now be considered as British property, (being one of those engaged to be worked by our first mining company), was discovered about sixty years ago by an enterprising young Spaniard, of the name of Obergon. He had no property, but was assisted by a Mr. Otterro, a shop-keeper in the neighbourhood; in a short time each partner annually shared profits to the amount of two hundred and fifty thousand pounds. During the revolution the machinery was destroyed by fire, and the water accumulated to such a degree, that it could not be extracted by the slender means they possessed, and the mine has remained unproductive ever since: but English mechanics and steam-engines are now on their way to it, and the most beneficial results may be expected, not from this alone, but from hundreds of other mines that are now lying dormant.

Mining operations, it is believed, have never been well conducted in Mexico, notwithstanding which, more than one thousand six hundred millions sterling have been issued from its treasury.

In my opinion nothing is now wanting, to re-establish the prosperity of this fine country, but an acknowledgment of its independence by Great Britain. That it is for ever severed from the mother-country I have not the smallest doubt: but in its present state it may yet linger for years, from the debility to which it has been reduced by the revolution, unless fostered and cherished by our assistance; with this powerful aid, it would shortly rise, and be again, in opulence and productiveness, what it originally was,—in which the favourable result to Great Britain is scarcely to be calculated. But I am entering into a subject far beyond my depth;—to the wisdom and vigilance of his Majesty's ministers the country

now looks with confidence, and it will not be disappointed.

Some delay in receiving the cargo of dollars destined for England prevented the departure of the Phaeton for several days; and as it was now the sickly season, my residence here was not altogether pleasant; but although the weather was very hot, my health, by attending to the medical advice I received in England, was not at all affected. My leisure offered an opportunity of seeing more of the city than I had done before, and my opinion of it improved on a further acquaintance. The public walk had now a better appearance; and the vegetation caused by rains had relieved it of its former aridity. I spent some pleasant hours at the houses of Mr. Stuart and my friend and travelling companion Mr. Bates, who was now established at Vera Cruz.

To Mr. Joshua Smith, an American gentle-

man, resident here, I am greatly indebted for his politeness and assistance; his knowledge of every thing connected with this country is exceeded only by his attention to every stranger who visits it.

I had little opportunity of forming an opinion of the ladies, except from seeing them in their regular daily attendance at the church of the convent in which I lived: among them were many fine women, whose deportment was most strictly decorous.

Of the Spanish merchants I can say nothing: but it is very natural to suppose, that, situated as they are, the arrival of so many English, and the consequent injury inflicted on their trade, cannot be very agreeable to them.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Departure from Vera Cruz.—Number of Birds in the Bay of Campeachy.—Havannah.—Azores or Western Isles.—Arrival at Portsmouth.—Medical Advice.

For several days after that which had been fixed upon for our departure the wind was unfavourable for our leaving the anchorage, but on the morning of the 31st of August a gun announced the raising of the anchor, and the Phaeton was under sail before we could get on board. What a change did ten minutes make in the situation of an Englishman, in a place like this, when he felt himself transported suddenly from the pestilential air of the most unhealthy place in the world, where he was surrounded by people by no means to

be reckoned upon as friends, saw none but Spaniards, Creoles, Indians, and Negroes, and heard nothing but their various jargons; but no sooner did he tread the deck of an English man of war, and find himself in the midst of his countrymen, than distance and danger, black vomit and pirates, vanish in an instant, and he feels already half at home in the sound of his native language, the welcome of the officers, and the rough jokes of the jovial crew !

A few days brought us off Campechy, but, owing to the shallowness of the water, we were obliged to anchor twenty-five miles from the town. Our captain, with some of the officers, went on shore on business, and to procure a supply of fresh provisions for the voyage. During their absence we were visited by great numbers of the smaller kinds of land birds, principally warblers and flycatchers, which reached the ship in a very exhausted

state, on their migration from the north side of the Gulph of Mexico to the coast of Yucatan. The cabin was never without these pretty creatures, which entered the windows in pursuit of the flies, that were here in great plenty. Some of them became familiar, remained undisturbed for many hours, and took the small chopped meat and water placed for them, affording me a better opportunity of observing their habits than I could have obtained on shore. The boys caught for me twenty-five different species on the deck and rigging; but the attempts to keep them alive were unsuccessful, and I preserved them on the spot. Many were of great beauty and variety, and some undescribed. Among those known were the purple heron, common snipe, pigmy sandpiper, the lesser spotted rail, American chatterer, orange and black warbler, and two kinds of swallows.

Not expecting the immediate return of the captain, I was employed in dredging for shells about a mile from the ship, accompanied by one of the officers, when to our surprise we observed the frigate under way, the signal for sailing having been made at such a distance that it was not visible to us. In the evening we were however again all on board, proceeding for the Havannah, and a few days' fine wind brought us under the guns of the celebrated Morro Castle, and we cast anchor in the beautiful harbour opposite the capital of Cuba, at which I landed in the evening with Dr. Mackie, and remained on shore for ten days. The Havannah is so well known, that a description of it must be unnecessary. I shall only say that the place itself, and the manners of its inhabitants, present a very different appearance from those of any part of Mexico, although peopled from the same country. Its churches and public buildings

must not be compared with those of the capital of New Spain, but its shops and streets exhibit more opulence. The ladies, elegantly dressed, are constantly seen at the windows on the ground floor, and in the evenings many hundreds of excellent one-horse carriages, like our covered gigs, driven by negroes in handsome liveries, are sported in the public rides and on the roads in the vicinity, filled with fashionably dressed persons of both sexes. The Botanic Garden near the city is a new establishment, finely laid out; and, although not yet finished, contains many curious plants and trees. On passing some low bushes, in a wet situation, my attention was attracted by the singular carved or embossed appearance of the leaves; but on endeavouring to reach one, to examine it, I was greatly surprised at the whole disappearing in an instant, and discovering that the raised ornament was occasioned by a nu-

merous family of beautiful little frogs, which had attached themselves to the foliage, and on my approach had leaped into the water.

The bishop's palace is recommended as deserving the attention of strangers. It is about three miles up the country, the situation very fine, and the road, through plantations of the cabbage-tree, cocoa, date, and a species of bread-fruit, is delightful to an European; but the house and garden, with the exception of some noble clumps of bamboos, are not worth seeing. The markets produce many of the Mexican fruits, and a great variety of curious birds, but, unfortunately, all of them so much mutilated as not to be fit for preserving. The fishes are numerous; the dolphin is commonly sold for the table, and considered a delicacy; land crabs are abundant in the market, and are good eating, and so is that elegant shell-fish the great *angel's wing pholas*, which is sold

by the dozen, like oysters, at a very low price.

The slave trade is still continued here, but the slaves in the town appear to be well treated. The market for them is just without the city gates; and ships for procuring new captives from Africa are openly fitted out at Regla, a small town in the harbour. Several sailed during our stay, avowedly for that purpose, but we were informed that piracy was most probably their object—indeed, many of the merchants here are very much slandered if they are not deeply concerned in both these kinds of transactions. The heat of the climate is excessive, and a residence in the city is therefore considered very dangerous to Europeans. The streets are close, ill ventilated, and unpaved; during the heavy rains they are so flooded as to be almost impassable, except for the carriages before mentioned. The theatre is large, and

in every department better managed than that of Mexico; and it was well attended on the only night I saw it.

On the 28th we sailed for England, but meeting with contrary winds, and calms, were obliged to put in at the Island of St. Michael's, one of the Azores, where we remained two days, taking in water, live oxen, and vegetables. St. Michael's is really a most charming place, and its principal town contains a number of English families. My reception here was very gratifying, Englishmen meeting with the greatest hospitality and attention. The climate is like the finest part of Italy, and the markets abound with every thing requisite for the enjoyment of life. I visited some of the extensive gardens, which produce the celebrated oranges for the supply of the English market. The wines made here nearly equal those of Madeira. I went to several of the Portuguese convents

and monasteries. The nuns are celebrated for making artificial flowers, which are composed entirely of feathers; our young gentlemen purchased largely of them, and had much amusement in their bargains with the holy sisters, who received their coarse jokes on the state of perpetual celibacy with great good humour. Much as I longed for home, I could have spent some time at this place with pleasure. On leaving St. Michael's, we passed over the Island of Sabrina, which only a few years since rose suddenly out of the sea, to a considerable height, and in a short time again disappeared; it has now forty fathom water upon it. An English gentleman, who was at St. Michael's at the time, told me that he went near it in a boat when it was rising, and that the heat of the water was so intense, that a great number of fishes obviously killed by it were seen floating in all directions. We arrived at Spithead, and landed at Portsmouth

on the 8th of November, after a delightful voyage, during which we had not lost a single man: the same good fortune attended my voyage out. I cannot close this little account without acknowledging the obligations I am under to Captain Sturt and the officers of H.M.S. Phaeton, to whose uniform politeness and attention I am indebted in a great degree for the safety of my collection, as well as for my personal comfort and convenience.

Previous to my leaving England, I applied to my medical adviser, whose residence and experience in tropical climates I knew to be such as to warrant my placing implicit confidence in his instructions: from him I received general directions for the preservation of health and the prevention of disease in the region I was about to visit.

These directions so fully answered the purpose for which they were given, and were

so much approved by medical practitioners in the country, that, considering they may be equally beneficial to other persons going out, I have no hesitation in giving them publicity; observing, that by attention to the simple rules recommended, both myself and son enjoyed uninterrupted good health, although I visited both Vera Cruz and the Havannah in the sickly season.

MY DEAR SIR,—The instructions which I would wish you to observe have chiefly the two following objects in view—to preserve your health, and to recover it if you become indisposed. To the former I will first draw your attention.

First,—*Your clothing* ought to be light, but not too cool, in a country which presents so great a variety of climate as the one you

are about to visit. You ought to wear flannel next your skin, and your feet should be always kept dry and warm. A light broad-brimmed hat will be the pleasantest to wear; but even with it you ought never to expose yourself to the sun. Wear always a light silk umbrella, as a shade from the sun's rays. Exposure to the sun in an intertropical climate is always hurtful to an European. If, owing either to the effects of a warm climate, or to the warmth occasioned by the flannel, the prickly heat should appear on the surface of your body, use no means to cure it, further than taking an aperient dose of salts; for as long as it remains out, you have little chance of being seized by any other complaint. Remember always to change your clothes after the least degree of wet. If this precaution should at any time be out of your power, instead of it, or even in addition to it, drink large

quantities of hot diluents, made still hotter with the addition of cayenne pepper.

Secondly,—*Sleep*.—You ought most carefully to avoid sleeping in low, damp, or marshy places. Sleep always, if you can, in the most elevated and dry situations and apartments; and never, if you can avoid it, in bed-rooms, the windows of which are in a direction that admits the *land wind*, more especially if that wind blows over neighbouring marshes or swamps. During the rainy season you should have a fire at night in your room. Always take care that the bed on which you rest is dry and well aired. The quantity of clothes on your bed should neither be too few nor too many: if the latter, you will be restless and fatigued; if the former, you will be more liable to be invaded by the causes of disease: you must be regulated in this by your feelings.

Thirdly,—With respect to the state of

your *stomach* and *bowels*.—Let your diet be light, but by no means low; never allow your stomach to be loaded. Continue your water-drinking system during your meals, with the occasional addition of a little white wine to the water, especially after dinner, when the weather is colder and wetter than usual. As you inform me that your visit will not be longer than a few months, I think you will run little risk of being attacked by any serious illness, if you take care of yourself. The enthusiasm with which you usually engage in any undertaking will most essentially contribute to your health: do not, however, let it lead you to excessive fatigue; for whatever lowers, even for a very short time, the energies of the system, disposes to the inroads of causes of disease which it would have otherwise successfully withstood. Never go out about your engagements before breakfast. If at any time you are

obliged to sleep in a marshy or low situation, you ought to take a tea-spoonfull of bark, with a few grains of cayenne pepper, in a glass of water with a little white wine in it, before retiring to rest*. Keep your bowels always comfortably open, either by means of some cooling salts, or of a few grains (four or five) of calomel at bed-time, and a gentle dose of salts in the morning.

As I expect you will altogether escape complaints in Mexico, I consider the best way to do so is to attend to the above directions, and not to use any means to lower the system before your arrival. Preserve the energies of your constitution, and avoid

* In low and marshy situations—in the rainy season particularly—when the air is close, impure, and oppressive, and when diseases are prevalent, then segar-smoking may be indulged in;—it may also be resorted to if you are obliged to go out before breakfast, or when you are exposed to more than usual cold and moisture.

every cause calculated to lower them. Purg-
ing and all evacuations beyond a comfortably
open state of the bowels, are not requisite
when you are in health.

Fourthly,—*The state of your mind* ought
to be cheerful, contented, and occupied with
objects calculated to excite, but not to ex-
haust, its powers. Avoid all the depressing
passions, and be not too anxious about any
object. You have nothing to fear from an
attack of illness in Mexico more than in this
country, therefore never dread its approach,
although it will be very proper to avoid it.
The only complaints by which you may be
invaded are fever, dysentery, and diarrhæa,
and, perhaps, cholera morbus. To the ma-
nagement of these I will now direct your
attention.

Avoid every place where the yellow fever
prevails; for although you may not be af-

fects by it, still, in such places, its causes are always present in a more concentrated form.

Fever.—If you should perceive the invading symptoms of fever commencing, as pain in the back, loins, and limbs; yawning, sluggishness, pale countenance, cold surface, megrims, and nausea, &c.,—open your bowels very gently, and add to the aperient something warm and stimulating, as cayenne pepper. Immediately after having taken the aperient, drink plentifully of warm diluents, take a warm bath, and employ most assiduously, after coming out of it, frictions with a coarse towel, over the whole surface of the body. These means will bring about reaction or excitement of the system; but they need not be employed unless the symptoms I have mentioned are present. If you feel your head to ache violently, and your temples to throb; your eyes and face flushed; your pulse hard

and full; your skin hot and dry, or even perspiring,—you should then undergo one large blood-letting, which may be repeated in a smaller quantity, if these symptoms remain or return. Your bowels ought to be fully opened by cathartics, and cold water continually applied to your head, so as to keep that organ constantly cool: the surface of your body may be sponged with cold water.

If vomiting should supervene, and be of a bad appearance, a large blister ought to be applied over the situation of the stomach, or the warm bath be frequently had recourse to; and frictions with the recently bruised pods of cayenne pepper ought to be applied over the surface of the body, until some degree of eruption makes its appearance; this last means should be assiduously employed if the energy of the system be very much diminished by the disease. Thirst may be quenched with spruce beer, or with water

made agreeable with lime-juice, and somewhat hot with cayenne pepper: both the lime-juice and the pepper may be taken in large quantities, if the vomiting assume a bad appearance, or if the strength sink; and the hot bath, with the frictions already described, ought to be rigidly employed. Spruce beer is an excellent drink, in the same state of the system (when its energies are considerably exhausted),—as also is brisk bottled stout. When the matters discharged from the stomach become black, and the skin assumes a yellow tinge, doses of the oil of turpentine, varying from a quarter of an ounce to one ounce, taken occasionally, but not frequently, furnish a reasonable prospect of relief.

Dysentery.—If you should be attacked with dysentery, and if you should have violent pain and much fever, you ought to be bled freely, and a blister should be applied over the abdomen.

You ought also to take small doses of opium, (either solid or in tincture), with lime-juice, every hour or two. The warm bath and frictions, as before recommended, will be also serviceable. Opium with lime-juice is an excellent remedy, but it should be employed without other medicines being taken by the mouth about the same time.

Cream of tartar, reduced to a fine powder, taken in the dose of three drachms in a consistent fluid, and repeated every six hours, is also an excellent medicine, but it ought to be taken uncombined with other remedies, unless with opium; opium, either in a solid or fluid form is the best remedy that can be given with the cream of tartar, in this disease, when it is attempted to be combated under circumstances which preclude the special care and direction of a medical man capable of ascertaining the operation of compound remedies. Under proper medical care, it may

be advantageously combined with small doses of rhubarb, or of ipecacuanha, in addition to the opium.

Diarrhœa ought not to be suddenly checked, unless it has exhausted the strength of the sufferer. If it have, or if it have become chronic, it may be then restrained by gentle means, such as small and repeated doses of rhubarb, combined with a grain of calomel, and, at bed-time, with half a grain or a grain of solid opium.

Cholera must be differently dealt with.— You ought to restrain it immediately by means of a very large dose of opium (about two or three grains); and after the violent vomiting and purging have subsided, take repeated but small doses of calomel and rhubarb, until bilious evacuations are procured. If these means fail, and if your strength be very much exhausted, take Ma-

deira wine, or brandy and water, with very large quantities of cayenne pepper.

^ If you are near an English medical man, take his advice, and show him these instructions,—they will be more appropriately applied under his directions.

By observing them I expect you to return to England as well as when you went. Wishing you every success,

I am, yours, &c.

JAMES COPLAND, M. D.

1, *Bulstrode Street, Cavendish Square,*

Dec. 3, 1822.

THE END.

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VOL. II.

- ✓ Mexican gentleman on horseback, to face the title
- ✓ Ancient Mexican sculpture, plates 1 and 2, page 63

Plate 1, No 1. Statue of an Azteck Princess.

Baron de Humboldt, in his "Researches concerning the institutions and monuments of the ancient inhabitants of America," has given three views of a statue similar to this, excepting a trifling difference in the drapery on the back of the head. The lady is represented sitting on her feet, which are bent under her, the common position of the Indian women whilst at church to this day; her hands resting on her knees, give the appearance, at first, of the front of the Egyptian Sphinx, to which the resemblance of the head-dress greatly contributes.

Plate 1, No. 2. A highly curious specimen of Mexican sculpture, in an exceeding hard stone, resembling hornstein, a coarse kind of jade; it is a species of compact talc, of most elaborate workmanship, and the bust of a Priest, or perhaps of an Idol representing the Sun. The head is crowned with a high mitre-shaped cap, decorated with jewels and feathers; it has long pendant earrings. The hands are raised; the right sustains something resembling a knotted club, while the left takes hold of a festoon of flowers which descends from the head; all the other parts are covered with the great rattle-snake, whose enormous head and jaws are on the right side of the figure,

while the back and sides are covered with the scales and rattles of that deadly reptile. The eyes, which were probably of precious stones, are wanting.

Plate 1, No. 3. *Bust of a Female, in lava. This figure bears a strong resemblance to the Isis of the Egyptians, having one of the towering and extraordinary head-dresses so often given to that divinity in the ancient temples.*

Plate 2, No. 1. *A sitting statue of a Female Figure, half the size of life, in reddish volcanic stone. The head strongly expressive of the character of the present race of Indians; the head-dress and sandals bespeak the time of Montezuma.*

Plate 2, No. 2. *A curious idol, of stone, representing the fore-part of a Crocodile, terminating in sacred ornaments often met with in the MSS. and Calendars; it appears to be the only one yet discovered, and weighs upwards of 500lbs.*

Plate 2, No. 3. *The Mexican Eagle. The city of Mexico has always been represented by the eagle; it occurs frequently in the Aztec writings, and this curious piece of sculpture is believed to have been placed originally in the palace of Montezuma.*

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The Map of Ancient and Modern Mexico and the Table of Distances to be placed at the end of vol. ii.

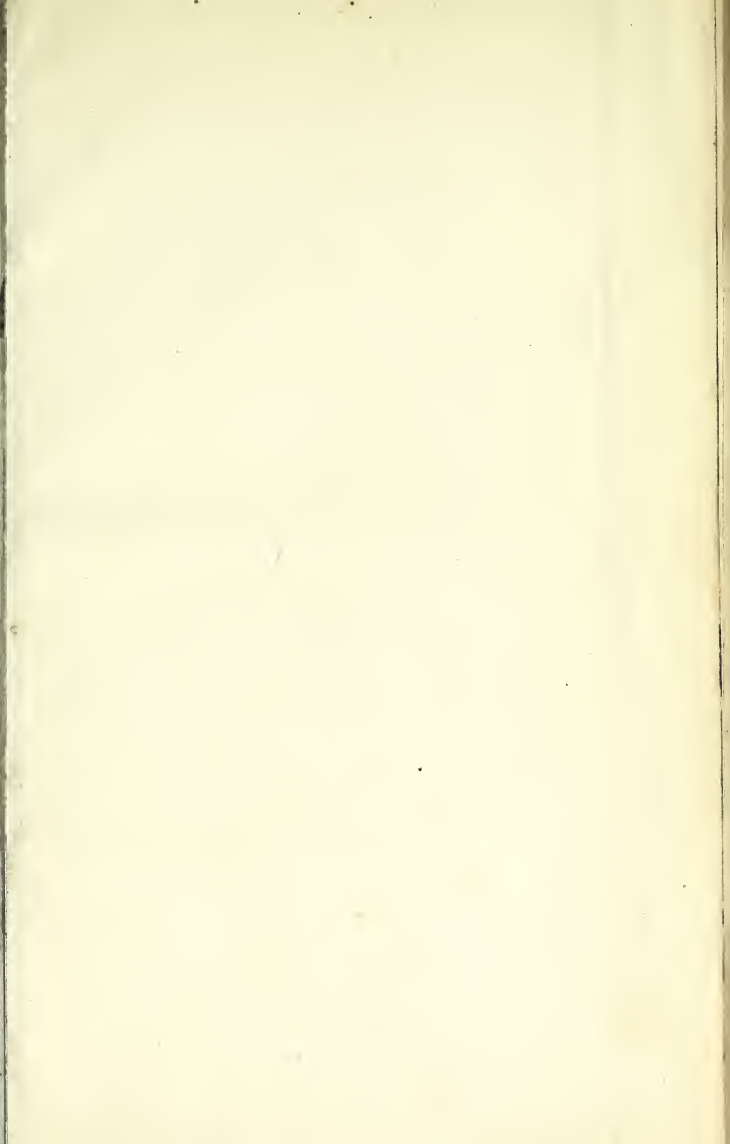
LONDON:

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“Geographical Tables of the common Leagues of distance of Citics and Towns of the Empire of MEXICO, translated from Spanish, and dedicated to the Gentlemen BULLOCKS by their servant MARIANUS CAL, in the 28th day of March, of the year of our Lord, 1823; third of our Independence.”

Longitude				Latitude			
De- grees	Mi- nutes	De- grees	Mi- nutes	De- grees	Mi- nutes	De- grees	Mi- nutes
270	..	19	10	MEJICO. Chief city, archbishopric, audience, university, and consulate. From here to <i>Acapulco</i> (port) 90 leagues. Formerly viceroyship.			
269	52	19	16	7	FEPOZOTLAN. Small town where was the only noviciate of Jesuites.		
271	50	18	58	22	29	PUEBLA DE LOS ANGELES. Place of intendant, bishopric. From here to <i>Zalapa</i> 40 leagues, to <i>Orizava</i> 30, to <i>Fehuaran</i> [25, to <i>Chilapa</i> 60.	
275	..	17	5	85	92	63	OAXACA. Place of intendant and bishopric.
277	30	16	19	220	227	198	135 CHIAPA. Small city and bishopric.
279	30	14	50	360	367	338	275 140 GOATEMALA. City and kingdom, archbishopric, audience, and university.
285	..	20	29	194	201	172	210 340 480 MERIDA. City, peninsula of <i>Tucatan</i> , bishopric and university. From here to <i>Campeche</i> , 40 leagues.
292	..	23	12	384	391	362	390 520 660 300 HAVANA. City and island, bishopric and university. From here to Prince's port, 150 leagues.
274	50	19	5	84	91	62	90 220 360 120 300 VERACRUZ. City, chief port, and consulate. From here to <i>Zalapa</i> , 22 leagues.
269	..	20	30	40	33	62	125 260 400 234 424 124 JUERETARO. City and passage for the interior country, called commonly <i>Pierra adentro</i> .
268	10	19	..	50	43	72	185 270 410 244 454 134 34 VALLADOLID. City and bishopric. Province of <i>Mechoacan</i> .
266	30	21	10	60	53	82	145 280 420 254 444 144 44 10 PAZQUARO. Between mountains and lakes.
265	40	20	50	50	45	72	135 270 410 244 434 134 10 24 34 CELAYA. City and plantations of olive-trees.
267	30	22	50	70	65	92	155 290 430 264 454 154 30 40 50 20 GUANAJUATO. Place of silver-mines.
267	40	22	15	80	75	102	165 300 440 274 468 164 40 45 55 30 12 LEON. Town with privileges, called <i>Villa</i> .
265	10	20	30	125	120	147	210 345 485 329 509 209 85 60 55 76 57 45 GUADALAJARA. Bishopric and audience. New <i>Galicia</i> .
265	50	23	30	130	125	152	215 350 490 324 514 215 90 95 105 80 65 50 65 ZACATECAS. Place of silver-mines.
265	..	24	35	88	83	110	173 308 448 282 472 172 48 68 78 44 36 48 93 40 SAN LUIS POTOSI. From here to <i>Nayarit</i> , places of preaching Gospel 60 leagues.
269	10	21	..	58	53	80	143 278 418 252 442 142 18 42 52 18 23 35 80 70 30 SAN LUIS DE LA PAZ.
264	..	25	..	190	185	212	275 410 550 384 574 274 150 165 208 145 127 125 110 60 100 130 DURANGO. Bishopric of New Biscay, 100 leagues to the Parral.
267	..	29	30	350	345	372	435 570 710 544 734 434 310 335 345 305 187 275 265 220 260 190 160 CHIHUAHUA. 60 leagues to the Parral.
257	40	23	50	400	395	422	485 620 760 594 760 484 360 380 370 350 330 325 280 345 373 160 225 210 CALIFORNIA. From here to <i>Cinacola's</i> places of preaching Gospel, 40 leagues.







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